

**SOUTHERN
ALBANIA
UNDER THE
ACROCERAUNIAN
MOUNTAINS**

**MAP OF
SOUTHERN ALBANIA
OR
NORTHERN EPIRUS**

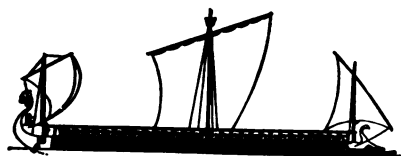
YUGOSLAVIA
Ochrida
Lake Ochrida
Lake Prespa
Pogradec
L. Malli
Bighstina
Korytza
SANDJAK OF KORYTZA
Erseke
Premet
Eskovio
Koritza
W
SANDJAK OF ARGYROCASTRO
Argyrocastro
Delvina
Santi Quaranta
Kerkyra
CORFU
Paxos
G
Paramythia
Artesos
Ioannina
Semen
Berat
Devoli
Kose
Valona
Dukut
Ipeleus
Malesiovo
SANDJAK OF KORYTZA
Korytza

Boundary of Southern Albania — — — — —
Portions offered by M. Venezelos + + + + +

Scale of Miles
 10 5 0 10 20

SOUTHERN ALBANIA UNDER THE ACROCERAUNIAN MOUNTAINS

BY
HENRY BAERLEIN



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I

THE FATE OF THE TWO SANDJAKS

IN a cascade of brilliant music Shelley throws before us Arethusa's rapturous journey downward from the Acroceraunians. How measureless would be his indignation could he know what now is happening in that province of Epirus, which consists of the two sandjaks of Argyrocastro and Korytza! It has been surrendered to fanatics, to the rule of men who most incredibly have been allowed by Europe, one could almost say encouraged, to bring back the darkness of the Middle Ages. There dwell in that stricken region something like 228,611 people, of whom 128,050 are Christians of the Greek Orthodox religion, while the rest are Muhammedans.¹ And the country inhabited by these people was joined in 1921 to the northern districts, to ruinous, malarial Durazzo, which is Moslem, and to mysterious Berat, which is Moslem, and to Scutari with her two rivers, where the

¹ These figures are not the most recent, for they date from 1908; but as the Turks who took the census were at that time very anti-Christian, it will not be objected that the Christians were less numerous.

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Roman Catholics are nervously pretending to be fond of their grim Moslem brothers.

It was not to be expected that the territorial problems which the Great War left to us would all be settled to the satisfaction of the average spectator who, with no prejudices on either side, is prepared to admit that a good case, even a very good case, may sometimes have to yield to circumstances. A disinterested and judicious man will sometimes have thought that the wisdom displayed in the settlement was of that kind which is called inscrutable. Yet we may doubt if anything will shock him more than the grievous error perpetrated on the east coast of the Adriatic. You have there a country of wild mountains, some of which are clothed in everlasting snow. In places underneath this rugged surface there are mines of coal and other minerals, but the inhabitants have hitherto gained their livelihood by tending goats and sheep upon the mountain side or cultivating, rather primitively, the fair soil of the lower slopes or of the plains. A great many of them under the Turkish administration went to seek their fortunes in America.

Were not all the people of those isolated regions and of others who till now had lived for ages their separate, sundered lives—were they not one and all Albanians? Was it not seemly that they should at last be gathered into a well-rounded State with frontiers, with a central Government, a flag and all the rest of it? Perhaps the world had very seldom heard Albanian voices asking for this consummation, but the world—that is to say, in the present case,

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the Habsburg monarchy—was in a mood of much benevolence. Vienna, which admittedly from her long practice could perceive the slightest murmuring of patriotic hearts, be they Slovene or Czech or anything else; Vienna, which could hear these things when London and Paris heard not a sound—it was Vienna which exclaimed that by the Adriatic the most ancient people, the Shqypart, whom others call Albanians, had at long last awakened to the direful fact that they had never been united to each other in one country, in Shqypenia; but that now the time for this had surely come. And so it happened that the dour Albanians found themselves inhabiting a country called Albania, and recognised by Europe, blessed by Europe. True it is that these enactments made no difference to the vast majority of this interesting people; they continued to enjoy their horrid or their sordid lives as if the tribes had not been merged in something larger and as if the feudal lord had not been superseded by the Mpret, William of Wied. It was not so much that his subjects disapproved of him, as well they might, or of their country—for the most part they were very ignorant of those innovations. Had you gone there, the majority of them would have told you that they were Turks; others—the Roman Catholics of the north—would have told you that they were Latins; whereas many of the Orthodox population of the south would have answered that at any rate they wanted to become Greek subjects. For the flame of patriotism, of desire, after all these centuries, for an independent

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Albania, was scarcely visible except among a very few Moslems and a good few of the Orthodox. Those travellers who testified that it was like a prairie fire, madly, gloriously spreading over all the country, and that with tears of gratitude the good Albanians were thanking Allah for delivering them from the Turk—well, there were some people in England who believed these travellers. Other people might have pointed out to them—but there are none so deaf as your propagandists—that very typically Albanian was the attitude of that bandit-chief who yearned for a larger Albania so that he might have a larger field for his operations. What ghastly nonsense it was when we were told that the Albanians, almost distracted by the pent-up feelings of two thousand years, exhibited the very purest form of patriotism! Not a man of them but would have died to save his infant State! And just before they had been presented by Europe with this Albania, what had the Moslem majority been saying? When a newspaper, the *Drejta*, which means “Truth,” was smuggled from Corfu, where it was printed, into the Albanian country, “Have a care,” exclaimed the Moslem Albanians, “or you will be speeding to the sands of Yemen! If this most disreputable thing is found again in your possession, it shall be your ticket for the journey. You are nothing but a traitor to our lord, the Padishah.” But Austria had resolved that what the *Drejta* wanted should be brought about, and its subscribers in the south, the Orthodox Albanians, were those who were most ready to accept the

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scheme. They were Albanians, though they professed the same religion as the Greeks ; they said they knew they were Albanians,—this, as we shall show later on, is a rather complicated question—but they also said that if their province merged itself in this new State with a Muhammedan majority they would be doomed. The Muhammedans might in public carry a copy of the Constitution in their hands ; they were as little capable of appreciating the new State with its red and black flag and a double-headed eagle as was old Francis Joseph, the Austrian Emperor, of comprehending the single-headed variety. Did he not at the Zoological Gardens in Vienna burst into tears, despite the entreaties of his staff, when he found himself in front of what, in his imperial and royal eyes, was such a terribly disfigured fowl ? The Muhammedan Albanians might strike their breasts and loudly talk about Albania—they were interested in it, most of them, if it would enable them to tyrannise over their Christian compatriots. And soon after the foundation of the State the southern Christians succeeded in having their province made autonomous. They would live outside the frontiers of Greece ; although many other Albanians dwell there—some such villages exist just outside Athens—in great contentment : they wished only to be allowed to live. Strange as it may seem, the statesmen of Europe recognised that there was something to be said for this request ; they recognised that Albanians whose entire culture was Greek,—since there was no such thing as Albanian culture—and

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who thereby had been raised very much above their Moslem compatriots, would not be willing to deliver themselves to the barbarians. This was how matters stood at the time of the outbreak of the Great War. The province which we are considering was then occupied by the Italians in whose nostrils this Greek culture had an evil smell ; for it betokened some resistance to the plan of an Italian Adriatic, the eastern shore of which, together with the islands, was to be filched as far as possible from the Yugoslavs, while farther to the south there was to be constituted an Albania under Italian protection. Italy, in fact, was going to be Austria's sole heir ; and, as regards Albania, she much preferred to have to do with the unenlightened Moslem than with a more advanced population. She therefore set about the task of making it into a Moslem country. With a quite Teutonic thoroughness the two confederates endeavoured to remould the southern part of Albania. But the sufferings of that devoted population—who, be it remembered, were practically the sole patriots in Albania—seemed as if they had come to an end with the collapse of Italy's arch-imperialist Sonnino. The destiny of this region—which you may call Southern Albania or Northern Epirus—was carefully studied by the Supreme Council ; and it having become obvious that the Albanians of the central and northern districts could not, in their present stage of development, be trusted with the administration of the south with its Christian majority—a small majority in point of numbers, but an overwhelming

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one with respect to intelligence, wealth, and social condition—it was recommended by the British and French delegations at the Peace Conference that this region should be given to Greece. And on July 29, 1919, Sonnino's more moderate successor Tittoni signed the consent of his country to the French-British resolution. As that sitting was concluded, "Ainsi," exclaimed Monsieur Clemenceau, "tout le monde est d'accord!" The patriotic Albanians of the south had been driven by their ruthless, changeless countrymen into the arms of Greece. Far better for them was that foreign sanctuary.

Those who cannot follow all the phases of the European kaleidoscope will be amazed to learn that this arrangement, reasonable as it was and just, has now been set aside. The Ambassadors' Conference in the month of November 1921 actually reversed the decision of the Entente and flung the liberated region back again to its oppressors.

You rub your eyes. "But if they have been given back," you say, "it must be that the delegates in 1919 were mistaken, and that now they have perceived the soul of goodness in the local Moslems." They have not. It is acknowledged that, with singularly few exceptions, the Moslem beys who now lord it in Albania are held in check by nothing but their mutual rivalries and the wishes of an irresponsible secret society called the Vatra.

"Well, then, various guarantees have been exacted, similar to those that were given by the so-called Succession States, which have pledged themselves to certain rights for their minorities."

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Yes, you are correct, for the Albanians did give guarantees such as had been forced from the Czechs. You can never be too careful—the Czechs might have taken it into their heads to shut up, say, the German High School at Bratislava, which of their own accord and at great expense they had established. Some people thought it was a little rude to demand guarantees from the noble Albanian, the child of such an ancient race. But nevertheless he gave them, and what has come of it you will read in this book. . . . It is impossible, however, to be up-to-date, for while the book was being written the Albanians continued the traditions of their forefathers. One instance will suffice: all the families residing in the communities of Stikas and Bezari, in the district of Erseka, who were living under the oppression and threats of the Albanian chieftain Sali Boutka, and who repeatedly and vainly appealed for protection to the authorities, at last in May of this year went *en masse* to Korytza for the purpose of laying their protests before the foreign consuls and to ask the Albanian Government either to protect them or grant them the right to emigrate.

II

THE STORY OF ARGYROCASTRO AND KORYTZA

“ My purpose,” said Ssu-ma Ch’ien, that illustrious historian who flourished in the first century B.C.—“ my purpose is to discover all that has happened in heaven or earth from the remotest times till now, and make a book of it.” The region we are contemplating—Southern Albania or Northern Epirus—has been celebrated from of old by the most famous Greeks. “ To the south of the Acroceraunian Mountains,” says Polybius, “ begins Greece.” Eustathius in his *Parechbolæ* writes that “ according to Herodotus, the extreme boundaries of Greece are Thrace and Epirus ” ; and Herodotus, talking of a temple of Jupiter which was set up in Epirus, mentions that the Selles were his priests. We come across them in the sixteenth book of the *Iliad* :

“ Zeus, King, Dodonean, Pelasgian, who dwellest afar,
Ruling Dodona, the wintry, where sit
Around your altar the Selles, priests
Who never wash their feet and sleep on the ground.”

In fact, there is no doubt that in those days, and

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till the fall of Macedon, the land was Greek and not Illyrian, the Illyrians being the ancestors of the present Albanians. It is true that Heinrich Kiepert, the German scholar whose erroneous Balkan map gave rise to so much trouble from the Peace of San Stefano onwards—it is true that Kiepert, in his *Manual of Ancient Geography*, opposes the great authors of antiquity, and says that the Epirotes were originally not of the Hellenic race, but that they were Illyrians who, after the Peloponnesian Wars, began to adopt the Greek language and manners. This allegation has, however, been disproved by Fich, another German pundit, who points out that it is a false interpretation of certain passages of Thucydides which call the Epirotes barbarians, whereas the inscriptions of Dodona show us that the Epirotic dialect is one of those idioms of Northern Greece which were common to all the Greeks from the Acroceraunians to Bœotia, and to Southern Thessaly. The land, we may take it, was Greek. And afterwards it was invaded by the Roman, Goth and Serb, the Venetian, the Albanian and the Turk. The two periods of Albanian sway extended from 1368 A.D., when the chieftain Peter Leossa led them to the conquest of the whole of Northern Greece, until 1422, when they were driven back by Sultan Amurad ; again, a few years later, under Skender Beg, the territory was Albanian. At his death it fell once more into the Sultan's hands, and so remained—nominally at any rate—until the Balkan Wars, when the new State of Albania was manufactured. And yet we shall, for

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two main reasons, call the district Southern Albania instead of Northern Epirus : in the first place, it is now officially included in Albania, and also the population nowadays confesses to be far more Albanian than Greek. Our excursion into the ethnology and history of Southern Albania will be comparatively short, since it matters little who was once the master in this province and what blood runs in the people's veins; much more important is it to discover what is in their hearts to-day.

We have said that most of the inhabitants of this province, which consists of the two old Turkish sandjaks of Argyrocastro and Korytza, profess to-day to be Albanians, whereas the most competent authorities agree that in ancient times they were Greeks. Let us see whether this change has been effected by the migration of the original stock, or whether that stock has by some gradual process or some rapid stroke been modified.

The history of the two sandjaks under the Turks is very obscure. That their Greco-Roman civilisation was roughly handled there can be no doubt, as also of the exodus of many of the most intelligent natives, who set out to seek new homes in Austria, Roumania, Italy, France, England and elsewhere. In place of them we find Muhammedans, and the probability is that these were also natives of the two sandjaks, who chose the line of least resistance. Among these renegades the Turks would find a sufficient number of partisans without having to

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import those men who were true Albanians and dwelt beyond the Acroceraunian Mountains. And for the most part these Albanians will have remained up there, preoccupied with their own fratricidal affairs. Those who in the two sandjaks accepted Islam would, as in other parts, come to look upon themselves as Albanians. This process of religious conversion preceding a change of nationality can be very clearly seen, for example, in the Golo Brdo mountain range, north-west of Lake Ochrida, where the converted relatives of Orthodox Serbs now feel themselves to be thoroughly Albanian. The Serbs who live in Prishten and the neighbourhood have many such Albanian relatives. So, then, in the two sandjaks it seems that, during the Middle Ages under the Turks, the original Greek population developed into Moslem-Albanian landowners and Greek peasants.

Though the Greeks were in a situation little to be envied, yet in course of time they managed to burst through the mist which lay across their land. Moscopolis and Korytza, Himarra and Souli in their different ways were beacons thrust out from the grey monotony. Moscopolis—the average mediæval merchant would have smiled if we had started by informing him where it is situated (near Korytza). Were not the enterprising natives of Moscopolis familiar in Constantinople and Belgrade, Vienna, Budapest and Leipzig? They had even established in those towns their own Chambers of Commerce, and it was generally recognised that both in wealth and culture the Moscopolites had

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everywhere a prominent position.¹ This material prosperity of the Moscopolis Greeks enabled them to make their town a centre of the arts. A monk, George Constantinidis, set up a printing-press in 1720, which had only been preceded by one other in the Turkish Empire. An academy, destined to be famous, was built at the instigation of Joseph, Patriarch of Ochrida, who frequented all the seats of learning in the west of Europe. From this body of young men there subsequently sprang the tireless propagandists of the Greek idea, who everywhere in Europe were recruiting-sergeants for the army that would some day liberate their countrymen. And others of the students of Moscopolis were poets who aroused the patriotic flame, the love of liberty among the Greeks who were in bondage. Twenty-three magnificent Byzantine churches (such as the Church of the Assumption, dating from 1715, Saint Athanasius, 1721, the Church of Archangels, 1724), and numerous palaces, more than 12,000 stone houses, the most humble of them, we are told, being well constructed, and among the public buildings the marvellous library—that was Moscopolis. But how came it, you will ask, that the powerful Moslem landowners of whom we have spoken, and the real Albanians to the north, allowed the Christian Moscopolis to flourish unmolested? The answer is that they did not. In 1788, rejecting all proposals of a tribute, they swept ruinously down, and in three days had blotted out

¹ Cf. *The Question of Northern Epirus at the Peace Conference*, by N. J. Cassavetes. New York, 1919.

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all the glories of rose marble, all the labours of so many centuries.

The rise of Korytza may be said to date from the foundation, in the year 1700, of her celebrated church of the "Living Source." Then in 1724 the cathedral of Saint George was begun; while from about this time there date two very well-known schools, that of mutual instruction, which continued for more than a hundred years, and the High School, which had inscribed upon it the words of Eythymos Mitkos, a local poet: "A great number of students have come out of this school, have dedicated themselves to science and the practical arts, and have done honour to Greek intelligence and industry."

At the other end of the two provinces the Greek idea flamed up, especially at Himarra. But on account of their extraordinary environment, the Himarriotes differed altogether from their brethren at Moscopolis and Korytza. A people living far away amid an almost trackless mountain range, their first thought was to keep intruders at a distance. They had usually lacked sufficient leisure for appreciation of unwarlike things; they were wont to be engaged either in fighting those who hoped to conquer them, or else in winning a scant livelihood from the reluctant soil. In the year 1518 these rough villagers succeeded in securing privileges from the Sultan Selim: a local autonomy, religious freedom, the right to bear arms, and almost total immunity from taxation. Nevertheless, in the course of years, they frequently rebelled against

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the shadowy overlord, so that among the constant irritations of successive rulers was the blue and white standard of the Himarriotes.

It may be asked whether these grecophil sentiments of Moscopolis, Korytza, and Himarra were not due to a religious solidarity. One may very reasonably presume that the Christians would lean towards the Greeks because they had the same religion. . . . And if the people of the two sandjaks had, in the intervening centuries, become largely albanised by some process or other, those who were Christians might lay more emphasis upon religion than nationality ; they might, though Albanians, look on themselves as Greeks ; for it is indisputable that these natives of Moscopolis, Korytza, and Himarra, to mention no others, did regard themselves as Greek. They regarded themselves as Greek, and yet many of them spoke Albanian ; this linguistic process—comparable with that of the Italian-speaking Slavs on the Adriatic—had been visible under the Turks. In 1625, for instance, Brerewood, cited by Miss Edith Durham, writes that Greek was not spoken in Epirus or the western part of Macedonia. This, however, would not show, as Miss Durham wants her readers to believe, that in those regions the Greek penetration (*sic*) was coming to an end, but rather that the Albanian language was being forced upon a non-Albanian people. Similarly there are many Greeks in the interior of Asia Minor—who speak nothing but Turkish ; and, on the other hand, the Turks of Crete have come to use the language of the island's

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Greek majority. Well, the Albanian language was in the Middle Ages invading the two sandjaks of Argyrocastro and Korytza, while under Ali Pasha this movement gathered impulse. It became more difficult for the population to stand up against the Pasha's policy. And yet, while the Albanian language was being spoken by an increasingly large number of people, Muhammedans and Christians, it is noteworthy that even the most fanatic pro-Albanians continued for the written language and for all commercial undertakings to use Greek. Down to this day, at Libochovo, a Moslem stronghold near Argyrocastro, the citizens habitually sign their names and keep all their accounts in Greek. Ali Pasha himself employed the Greek language for his correspondence and decrees. Yet his campaign against the Greeks was very bitter.

Now, since we find a Greek people largely talking Albanian and thorough Albanians writing in Greek, it is obvious that the languages which were used in the daily life of the two sandjaks gave little indication of the people's political sentiments. Yet there have not been wanting publicists who very rashly based their arguments on the habitual language. How far astray this leads one we shall see when contemplating the heroic Suliotes, who in Albanian shouted their defiance of the threatening Greek letters sent by Ali Pasha ! It was sad that when the International Commission was sent out in 1918 to ascertain the wishes of the population, whether they desired to be in Greece or in Albania, the only subject the Commissioners were authorised

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to deal with was the language usually spoken. The picture that would thus be painted was no doubt known to be quite worthless by some European statesmen who set up the terms of reference ; the majority of them, however, did not dream that they were walking over quicksands. Which of these two types of statesmen should evoke a deeper sadness ?

But of this Commission we shall say a little more when we arrive at 1913. Let us go back now to Ali Pasha and consider who that people was against whom he was actively engaged from 1788 onwards. Whereas our knowledge of what happened in the two sandjaks during the Middle Ages is rather vague, much more precise and copious is the information which illuminates for us the Pasha's period. Of course the people against whom his very drastic albanising methods were brought to bear may have been Albanians who had fallen under the spell of the Greeks ; but if this attraction was so powerful as to require the sort of exorcisms used by Ali Pasha, we may say that these Albanians had become very excellent Greeks. It is much more probable, however, that the hand of Ali fell on real Greeks, for in the terror which he spread he was enthusiastically aided by Albanians who would not have acted as they did if it had been against their countryfolk. Albanians only kill Albanians with gusto if they have matters of blood-vengeance between them. Ali went about the business very thoroughly : he turned the churches into mosques, he closed the schools, he burned and pillaged the

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obstreperous towns, such as Delvino, which was utterly reduced in 1798. Because this fierce old man had round him a few learned Greeks, among them Psalides, the mathematician, it need not be thought that he repented sometimes of his anti-Greek measures. He loved to surround himself with dervishes and astrologers ; to these he added Greeks of erudition, for the purpose of impressing the important traveller. Occasionally he would try his utmost to be spoken of with admiration to Napoleon ; but in the Emperor's correspondence he is usually called "ce brigand."

What strengthens us in the belief that Ali was the first great albaniser is the fact that we are well informed concerning all the steps he took, whereas we are told little of what happened in the centuries which followed the creation by the Turks, on their arrival, of those Moslem and Albanian landowners. Once more a number of the Greeks, who saw no other way out of the situation, changed their faith and thus secured the smile of Ali. That shrewd personage was less concerned to bring the Caliph more adherents than to swell the number of his own Albanians ; the religious change, as always, was a stepping stone. Another process which he favoured was the importation of Albanians into the two sandjaks, and from 1806 until 1822 he was indefatigable in transporting to the land this alien element. Now for the first time one could find a quite considerable number of Albanians there who were of true Albanian origin and not mere renegades or sons of renegades. A country which had ethno-

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logically been quite Greek was now invaded by another race. ("From all time," says M. Justin Godart, the unfortunate French emissary to whom we shall refer again—"from all time Epirus and Albania have been ethnically and geographically one, and Epirus is Albanian.") An Albanian governor was in command; the Greeks were persecuted; some of them, as Sir Vincent Caillard pointed out,¹ became apostates to the Moslem faith—preserving, however, the festivals of the Greek Church, invoking the Greek saints, and in sickness asking the Greek clergy to pray over them. And yet these pseudo-Moslems would ally themselves with the authorities and grievously oppress their fellow-countrymen. This territory, says Sir Vincent, of Northern Epirus, "except for a small strip on the coast, from Cape Glossa down to Parga, which is inhabited by an offshoot of the Tosks, who are called the Tchams, can only be said to be Albanian in the most arbitrary sense. . . . The Tchams are a quiet, inoffensive, agricultural people, fast becoming hellenised"—remember that he wrote in 1885—"by their close intercourse with the Epirotes, whose fortunes they would probably prefer to follow." But from the time of Ali Pasha onwards the unhappy Christian majority—those who were not apostates nor descendants of apostates nor Albanians introduced by the pernicious Pasha—led a very miserable life. Now and then, like a volcano, the Greek spirit would burst forth in devastating splendour; and unhappily, like a volcano,

¹ Cf. *Fortnightly Review*, April 1885.

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it would often cause more damage to its own than to its neighbour's vineyard. "Near Lucovo," says Pouqueville, the learned Academician who spent years in the country as envoy of France—"near Lucovo, at the sight of the men of Ali, whom the people recognised from afar, the inhabitants had closed their gates as at the approach of an enemy. So justly is the name of those belonging to the Pasha of Jannina hated. While we were passing, the inhabitants hurled curses upon us. We came near Oudessovo, which in 1798 was a beautiful village and now had only one villa of Ali Pasha. All the inhabitants had been murdered because they had been Christian Greeks." (What says M. Justin Godart ?) "Then we came upon the town of Hagios Vassilios, the inhabitants of which had also been butchered in 1798 by the Albanians, and the town was nothing but ruins now. We passed by Nivitza Bouba, which had been destroyed in April 1798. As we were approaching Delvino we heard shots. An Albanian officer returning announced that Ali's forces were taking Delvino. He advised me that it was not safe for me to appear as a Christian. He gave me Albanian clothes. We entered Delvino. Flames were rising from the town. The Albanians had pillaged and set it on fire. The officer informed me that he was showing too much kindness to a Christian. He said that every Muhammedan who shows friendship for the Christian is of a dubious character and unworthy of the true Faith of the Prophet. We entered Dridgsi. An Albanian crier went out and demanded

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of the Greek people that each family should bring two lambs, chickens, milk, cheese, butter, eggs, wine, bread, and fodder for the horses. It is impossible to describe how difficult it has proved for me to study the Greek people of the province owing to the suspicions of the ruling Albanians. But my observations have persuaded me that their large numbers, their courage, their industry, and their activity will some day change the face of Greece."

Under these circumstances the afflicted Greeks would emigrate when it was possible. The forty villages of Zagori, says Pouqueville, "became fiefs of Ali Pasha. And for that reason the Zagorites abandoned their homes and flocks and fled to other parts of the world." And of those who stayed, many left their fertile lands and sought a refuge in the mountains. From these mountain fortresses they harassed the Albanians, whenever the latter committed acts of violence against the Greek peasants in the plains. . . . And to know how great a thorn to the Albanians were these patriotic Greeks, we have only to recall what happened at Zolongo. Ali had attempted to win over the two leaders, Botzaris and Tjavella, of the dauntless Souliotes. They gave no sign of a submission; and if Souli could frustrate his plans, would not the other Greeks make common cause with them? And so he wrote a treacherous letter:

"MY FRIENDS,—Captain Botzaris and Captain Tjavella, I, Ali Pasha, send you greetings. I know

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very well your valour and your manliness. I have great need of you. Come then, I pray you, as soon as you receive this message. Get all your valorous men with you, and come that we may go and crush my foes. This is the time when I need your friendship. Now you can show how much love and friendship you have for me. Your pay will be double that which I give the Albanians, because I know your bravery is much greater than that of the Albanians. I will not undertake to make the war without you. I shall expect you soon. I greet you.

ALI PASHA."

The Souliotes knew that these professions of friendship were a snare ; yet, to avoid arousing Ali's anger and to supply themselves with food and ammunition, they decided to send seventy men under Captain Tjavella. And they wrote to Ali that seventy men with Tjavella as their leader were sufficient to ensure victory. The Pasha was incensed, but veiled his wrath, and issued orders that his troops should march against Argyrocastro. Secretly he took them to Souli, and, on arriving at the outskirts, he commanded his Albanians to organise games, so that the seventy Greeks should join in them and leave their arms. Thus they were captured ; but one man escaped, and warned the folk at Souli ; and the Pasha, whose one hope had been to take them unawares, went back to Jannina and thrust Tjavella and his comrades into dungeons. After three months Ali had the captain brought before him, and promised him a store of gold and

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every honour he could ask for if he could obtain the surrender of Souli. "So long as I am imprisoned here," replied Tjavella, "never hope to possess Souli. But if you release me you may hope to seize it." "And how shall I trust you?" asked Ali. "You have my only son in your hands. My son, Photos, is the dearest part of my soul." This hostage satisfied Ali. Tjavella hastened to Souli and wrote the following letter to the Satrap :

"ALI PASHA,—I am glad that I have deceived a treacherous man like you. I am here to lead my countrymen against a thief. My son may perish. But I will avenge his death with desperation. Some Turks, like you, will say that I am a pitiless father in that I am sacrificing my only son to save myself. I answer that if you seize these mountains you will murder my son, my family and all my people. And I shall not live to avenge their deaths. But if we win, I shall have other sons. My wife is young. If my son, young as he is, is not satisfied to die for his country, he is not worthy to live and to be known as my son. Proceed then, treacherous Albanian. I am impatient to take vengeance.—I, your sworn enemy,

"CAPTAIN LAMBROS TJAVELLA."

And Eaton, an English traveller who was present, wrote in his *Voyage* :

"The Pasha did not think it fit in his first outburst of rage to put his hostage to death, but sent him to Jannina, to his son Veli Bey, who governed in his absence. I was present when the boy was

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brought before him. He replied to the questions put to him with a courage and a boldness which surprised everybody. Veli Bey told him that he was waiting only for orders from the Pasha to burn him alive. 'I am not afraid of you,' replied the boy, 'for my father will do the same thing to your father or to your brother if he lays hands on them.'"

Then Ali Pasha gathered his Albanian forces and decided to crush the Greeks of Souli. He appeared before his troops and spoke to them: "My brave soldiers," said he, "you know very well how many evils the infidel Greeks have brought upon us; how many towns and villages they have taken away from us; how many lands they have snatched away from our possession. If to-day we leave them alive, they will gradually dare to seize our homes and capture our wives and children. I, with your prowess, have subdued all the other Greeks; I have put to flight all my enemies; and now it is a shame that a handful of robber infidels should make us bolt our doors for fear of them. Remember how much blood has been shed by our brethren the Ottomans for the conquest of these lands. Now it is time to avenge their deaths and to exterminate these troublesome Greeks. Our forces are many and brave. To-day we need not much ammunition. With sword in hand we will slaughter them. Those of you who are brave and faithful Muhammedans will show it to-day. I promise to all those who enter Souli victorious five hundred piastres each."

You will observe that Ali did not call the Souliotes

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Albanians. Three thousand of the Pasha's followers rushed with unsheathed swords and swore by the Prophet not to return until Souli was captured. The battle raged for hours without decision. Suddenly there was a lull towards the latter part of the afternoon. Both sides were exhausted by their fighting all the forenoon under a hot July sun. Then the women of Souli, thinking that the Greeks had been destroyed, came together to consider what to do. "Sisters, the battle is at an end," cried Moscho, the wife of Tjavella. "The Albanians, it seems, have conquered, and have slaughtered our men and our boys—all our citizens. What must we do? Shall we surrender to the Turks? Shall we become slaves? Or shall we die like our men and our boys?" "Death! Death!" cried all the women; whereupon three hundred of them, under Moscho, flung themselves from the rocks of Zalongo upon the enemy and routed them. When Ali heard of this he threw himself to the ground and, tearing his cheeks, he groaned in Albanian, "Bo, bo, Mendet Allah!" (Alas, alas, pity me, my God!) His language was Albanian; that of the Souliotes was Albanian. And this, according to some strange controversialists, proves that the people *were* Albanians! In the same way one would demonstrate that English-speaking Irishmen are really English!

We have told of Souli at some length, since it shows us with what savage persecution the Greek spirit had to struggle. Pouqueville enumerates at least eighty villages which he had seen in ruins,

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after the Greek inhabitants had been murdered or driven to other lands by the ferocity of the Moslem. A large part of the Hellenic population of Epirus had succumbed to cruel oppression, had turned Muhammedan and lost its mother-tongue. It is interesting, by the way, to note that in the alien tongue which they adopted they found relics of the language of their distant ancestors. Philologists have shown that the mixed language called Albanian has a very small number of indubitable native words—out of 5140 terms in Meyer's dictionary it appears that only 400 belong to the primitive Indo-European basis of Albanian. The other words spring from Latin, Slav, Turkish and Greek. The Greek is often not that of to-day, but of three thousand years ago. The modern Greek reader does not always understand his Homer, and the best thing he can do is to consult a man who knows Albanian. As survivals of old Greek in the Albanian language we have four letters, all pronounced quite differently from one another, while in modern Greek they have yielded up their individuality and every one of them is pronounced *ee*, as in sea.

The Greek Revolution of 1821 would have caused Constantinople far less trouble if the Albanian-speaking Greeks—those of the two sandjaks and those who had migrated from them, as, for instance, the heroic mariners of Hydra—had not rallied so enthusiastically to the flag. It was the personality of one of these men, the romantic Marco Botzaris, which made Byron sing :

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“ And yet how lovely is thine eye of woe,
Land of lost gods and god-like men art thou,
Again the Hellenes are free ! ”

From the two sandjaks, which we now—let us hope for a little time—call Southern Albania, there came a band of famous leaders, such as Caraïskakis, who swept the Turks from Central Greece and captured Athens. We have no space to chronicle the exploits of his countrymen; they greatly helped in liberating Greece, but their own province had to stay in Turkey's grip; nor is it astonishing that now the Sultan, furious with those who had rebelled against him, raised up the Albanians as a scourge. From 1830 down to 1912 the Greek population was oppressed. In 1854, in 1866 and in 1877 they rose in arms to shake off their Albanian tyrants; but the Albanians, helped by Turkey, struck them down; and so it came about that numbers of them emigrated—some to Greece, others choosing Egypt or South Africa or the United States. The wonder is that the whole country did not become albanised; but when the persecution was less severe, many of those who had concealed or lost their national sentiments recovered them, while a large number of the emigrants came back from their wanderings. This, of course, implies a certain amount of tolerance on the part of the Turkish Government; but to assert, as does Tourkhan Pasha, that Greek culture would not have made its way into the two sandjaks but for this tolerance, is surely to misinterpret history. He

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also asks us to believe that there is only "an insignificant number of Greeks who were introduced by Greece at a comparatively recent date, and who cultivate Albanian properties in the valley of Argyrocastro and the plain of Delvino!"

We reach the twentieth century—the Young Turks come into power and appoint an Albanian governor at Jannina. There had been no Albanian governor since the days of Ali; and the new official started forthwith on a policy of violent repression. The leading Greek families were proscribed. The clergy were persecuted. The schools, which the Sultans had respected from the time of Ali Pasha, were attacked by the Albanian governor. . . . But, thanks to the extreme severity of the Young Turks and their blind zeal for turkifying all the races in their empire, they succeeded also in rousing the anger of the Albanians, who rose in revolt in 1908. Theotokis, the Greek Prime Minister, then wrote to the Albanian chief Ismail Kemal bey, asking him what views he entertained as to the frontiers of his country. Ismail answered that the just boundaries between Albania and Greece would be a line drawn from Valona to Monastir. And Greece was therefore quite ready to assist the Albanians. But Ismail Kemal's idea of independence did not appeal to his countrymen. What did they care for independence? So long as they were exempted from taxation and compulsory military service they were satisfied with Turkish rule. Again the Turk and the Albanian tried together to suppress the people's Greek sympathies,

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and now they were reinforced by the Austrian and Italian propaganda. All these agents, using very various methods of persuasion, strove to make the natives call themselves Albanians. And in the Balkan War more than 40,000 of these people fled to Corfu. Was it likely that the grecophil inhabitants who had survived such multifarious and prolonged attacks would let themselves be tamely swallowed? Their love of Greece—augmented, doubtless, by their experience of the Albanians—caused the wealthier among them to devote large fortunes to her greater glory: hospitals and schools, observatories, battleships—the list is huge of what these benefactors gave to Greece. Their largesse also was bestowed on those who had to start their life, at any rate, as they had done, among Albanians. When Avramides gave to Korytza 400,000 francs on the condition that in the elementary schools Albanian should be taught as a *foreign language*, the indignant community, who wanted to have nothing whatever to do with the Albanian language, declined his offer, disavowed him and compelled him to leave the town. When Douros, another rich native, placed at their disposal 650,000 francs for divers beneficent works, this also was refused, because he had addressed his letter to the “Christian Orthodox community of Korytza,” which would include a number of Albanians. And if this attitude repels you, bear in mind how the Albanian Christians allied themselves with the Muhammedans and were a peril to their co-religionists.

The Balkan War took from the Turks most of

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their European empire, and the liberated populations sang their ancient, unforgotten folk-songs as the Greek and Serbian and Bulgarian armies came to join them to their brothers. On every wind the words of freedom flew, and in Albania at last there was set up a free and independent government. The head of it was Ismail Kemal bey; and even if another gentleman, Essad Pasha, established a separate government, we would not say that this was necessarily a fatal portent, since a new State cannot be expected to be born quite placidly. A certain effervescence and some bloodshed between the two factions—with the Albanian people bent upon liberty the name of their ruler would have been to them a secondary consideration. Those who did not know them said that even if at first they made mistakes, if their infant steps were as unsteady as those of the Serbs, Bulgars, and Greeks had erstwhile been when those countries gained their independence, yet they were animated with the all-pervading spirit of freedom, and that was all that mattered. But what did the Albanian people do? The great mass of them did nothing. They had no desire to found a State. As subjects of the Turkish Empire they were perfectly content, since they had for so long enjoyed the privilege of plundering the non-Albanians around them. That was almost all they wanted, that and immunity from fiscal and military obligations. But Austria and Italy addressed themselves to founding this new State.

It is scarcely worth while saying that neither of

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these two Great Powers had contemplated losing all control over the new country. The Vienna Cabinet was in favour of Albanian independence under an Austrian protectorate; while Italy announced that she desired a large Albania which included districts that were strongly grecophil. But the Italians were well aware that with the provinces of Argyrocastro and Korytza under Albanian domination they would themselves have much more influence there than if those lands were Greek, for the Albanian Government would be as defective in capacity as in experience and resources. While this question was in the air during the first months of the Balkan War, the Marquis di San Giuliano, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, who at the beginning of his diplomatic career had for a long time sojourned in Albania, confessed to M. Caclamanos, the Greek chargé d'affaires at Rome, that Argyrocastro and Korytza were Greek; but he added that the rights of a small people such as the Greeks could not prevail over the interests of a Great Power, such as Italy.¹ In order to bolster up their case, the Italians published quite fallacious ethnographic maps of South Albania. "If we wish to understand the mentality of Italian diplomats," said Clemenceau,² "we ought to examine the ethnographic maps of South Albania which circulate in Italy. They are a mass of conscious errors. The district of Korytza, where more than half the population is Greek, is there

¹ Cf. *Bulletin Hellénique*. Paris, March 17, 1919.

² *Homme Libre*, May 15, 1913.

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shown as being exclusively Albanian ; the districts of Jannina and Delvino, where the Greeks amount to 80 per cent. of the population, are represented as Albanian districts with here and there a scanty group of Greeks."

Naturally the proposal to deprive them of the two sandjaks caused the Greek Government to state that they could not accept such a decision ; they suggested that a plebiscite should be held in that territory. This was very embarrassing to Rome, which therefore talked of other matters, such as the neutralisation of the canal of Corfu. But eventually, soon after the Great Powers had in July 1913 created the autonomous principality of Albania, it was resolved that an International Commission should visit South Albania. What were they to study ? Nothing at all, save the language spoken in the people's homes. But these terms of reference were, as we have shown, most futile ; for generally in the two sandjaks both the Greek and the Albanian language were spoken ; so that, as Commander Hilton Young has pointed out,¹ it was as if you were to count those people who possessed a left leg and ignore all those who had a right one. As for the personnel of the Commission, the British, French, Russian, and German delegates do not call for special remark ; but the Italian representative, Signor Labia, is stated to have been a pronounced grecophobe, and his colleague, Captain Castoldi, who had previously served in the Turkish gendarmerie, had a similar reputation ; while the Austrian

¹ *Contemporary Review*, May 1919.

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delegate, Herr Bilinski, is said, on the authority of the Turkish colonel, Vehit bey, to have been so warm a friend of the Turks that, while he was Consul-General at Jannina, he assisted them to obtain munitions with which to fight the Greeks; and even if it was without his knowledge that he and his wife and his vice-consul were photographed, during the siege, under the gallows from which Greeks were dangling, yet it could not be denied that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs at Athens was in possession of the complete scandalous correspondence which this Austrian official had exchanged with a well-known brigand chief, the Albanian Emmer effendi. When Bilinski was upon the point of death—he died in his motor between Leskovik and Jannina—he confessed that he knew that during the progress of the Commission he had been unjustly anti-Greek, but he argued that his attitude had been beneficial for his fatherland. An honest German, Prince Lichnowski, who was thoroughly acquainted with the problem, wrote in his famous pamphlet which was published in 1918, that the best and most natural solution would have been to incorporate these districts called “South Albania” in Greece. . . . It must always be borne in mind that in the debatable regions of the Near East a man’s nationality is a very fluid attribute. Far less does it depend upon his ancestors than his ideas, which ride roughshod over ethnic questions. Thus a native of Southern Albania—as we shall see elsewhere in this book—may honestly but with doubtful accuracy call

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himself an Albanian. In such a district, therefore, a man's avowed nationality is not always that which he prefers, nor even that which redounds to his interest. You may very often presume that if one of these people has changed his nationality—and it is very much easier for a Macedonian Bulgar to transform himself into a Serb or even a Greek than, say, for an Englishman to become an American—he has been attracted by the prospect of material advantages. Yet cases are not lacking of the people who are quite prepared to flout ethnology and suffer for it: near the quay at Smyrna you will find an innkeeper from Crete with a typical Greek surname; he had become a convert to Islam, and thereupon had developed into so thorough a Turk that, when his island came into the hands of the Greeks, he, and many like him, had preferred to take the path of exile. It was, of course, very pleasant in the Turkish Empire for a man to become the subject of a great Western or Central European Power; and they often cleave to this adopted nationality although it may at times be inconvenient. Thus the Greeks of Smyrna, who had legally become Frenchmen, but whose sentiments were patriotically Greek, received an intimation from the French authorities that they should leave their houses and their shops undecorated after the Greek army had in 1921 gained a considerable victory over the Turks. From Smyrna, too, there comes a curious example of a man whose nationality was not that of his forefathers. This individual, a Persian with an Armenian strain, had for some time been a British

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subject, so that, finding himself in England during the war, he was conscripted, and joined the London Scottish. This gentleman was much more fluent in Persian, and even in Greek, than in English ; it would have been unwise for the Ambassadors' Conference to determine that since these were his ordinary languages he did not wish to be a British subject.

"Europe," exclaimed M. René Puaux, "is going to allow a crime to be committed !" This French publicist did not speak without knowledge of Southern Albania. His celebrated countryman, Joseph Reinach, declared that one should not merely ask what language a people speak, but what in their hearts they are longing for. "At Korytza, as in all the region of Argyrocastro," said he, "you will find a majority of Greeks who have not been unfaithful for one day to their old national idea." This majority has dwindled, owing to the treatment it has met with, but the yearning for Greece has not diminished. We could quote from other writers of repute, such as Professor Spenser Wilkinson. Talking of Korytza in April 1919 : "To my mind," said he, "the evidence is indisputable, and I shudder when I think that this town may be delivered to the Albanians." We could go on quoting men of this calibre ; and, on the other hand, we could call up as witnesses Miss Edith Durham and Mr Aubrey Herbert. If, by the way, we do not give the reasonings of these two prominent albanophiles, it is because in our opinion they are not worth serious consideration. As to the absence of Albanian

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voices, we must remember that this people were without experience in such affairs. Thus, had they been articulate, they might have vigorously demanded to be free and to have certain frontiers; but, as we have said before, and as one of their devoutest friends, Mr Harold Goad, must admit,¹ the State which during 1913 burst into existence was the fruit of Austrian and Italian zeal. In December the protocol containing the results of the inquiry by the precious International Commission was duly signed at Florence—these results, of course, had long beforehand been arranged. They had been brought about by threats of war from the Triple Alliance—when it suited the Italians they could be very loyal allies. The Greek Government, in assenting with a vigorous protest² to the annexation of Northern Epirus to Albania, did so in the belief that the conditions laid down by the London Conference would be executed—namely, that civil and financial affairs would be under the control of an International Commission, and also that the Albanian gendarmerie would have foreign officers. M. Venizelos, when the blow had fallen, did what he could to soften it; he managed, for example, to negotiate the purchase of seventeen Greek villages in the upper valley of Argyrocastro. But over most of the two sandjaks hung the destiny they dreaded; they were in despair, and now, since Europe had been so unjust, it seemed to them that

¹ Cf. *Fortnightly Review*, May 1922.

² Cf. the Note addressed on February 8, 1914, by the Greek Government to the Great Powers.

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they must go themselves in search of justice. They revolted.

Naturally the Greek Government was charged by the Powers with having fomented this insurrection. M. Venizelos made reply that while he was not organising the resistance of the Epirotes, yet he would do nothing to prevent their "sacred legions" from assembling. He was, in fact, so determined that his country in this grievous situation should preserve a correct attitude, that he caused the navy to blockade the coast of Epirus and the army to cut off that province from the rest of Greece. A few officers and men of this army, as was to be expected, and also one or two cannons, found their way to the insurgents' camps; but generally the Crown forces were punctilious in obeying the hard orders and refusing to assist their brethren in revolt. Venizelos went so far, indeed, as to give orders that if refugees attempted to cross over into Greece they should, in the last resort, be fired upon—and we must remember that in Epirus, North and South, the great majority of Greeks and grecophils are Venizelists. His own popularity he did not take into account—he lost, for instance, the support of M. Parmenides, the Finance Minister of Northern Epirus, as well as that of a good many other people—but what he set himself to do was to guide his country through this difficult time and keep unswervingly the promise he had given to the Powers.

We have spoken of the Financial Minister; those who were at the head of affairs in the insurgent

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province were in the position of Ministers, although they modestly deprecated the title. "We do not pretend to hold portfolios or aspire to Cabinet rank," said the very able Epirote M. Karapanos to a correspondent of the *Daily Chronicle*. "I am deputed to take charge of our relations with the world outside, because I have been fifteen years in the diplomatic service and am familiar with the work." The chief of this autonomous Government was George Zographos, an Epirote and son of a great philanthropist. He was himself more interested in agrarian than in political questions, but he had found the cry of that unhappy province irresistible. When asked his opinion of the settlement arrived at by the European Powers: "Iniquitous!" said he. "What was the use of a Commission whose decisions were guided by the claims of two of its members? I cannot understand what prompted Sir Edward Grey to propose that frontier. Was it merely to pacify Italy? Or did he think that Greece had more than enough territory? That would be all very well if it were in an African desert. However this is not a question of securing more or less land, but of nationality, of securing a decent existence for a people. . . . I maintain that the Albanian clans have not arrived at a degree of social evolution permitting them to form even a conception of a Constitutional State. They do not possess the qualities needful for creating and administering one, and I assert that the Greeks of Epirus do possess such qualities."

Commander Hilton Young has testified to the

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good organisation of the volunteer army of Northern Epirus, but unfortunately some of the Christian inhabitants of the two sandjaks seized this opportunity to take revenge upon the Moslems. Leskovik and other places were in part destroyed; the loss in human life was small, but there was great material damage. It was lamentable that the autonomous Government had insufficient strength to keep its partisans from this their vengeance. Under the Turks and under Ali Pasha and again under the Turks, it had been more or less unenviable for the Greeks, and now they lacked forbearance.

The Great Powers were forced to recognise the autonomy of the Epirotes, but the Central Powers insisted that autonomous Epirus should be part of the Principality of Albania; and the representatives of the Epirotic Government were obliged to accept the terms rather than keep up an unequal struggle.

Meanwhile the ill-fated William of Wied had landed at Durazzo. A good deal has been written—for the subject is alluring—on this pitiable adventure. With respect to the two sandjaks, it is not generally known that Colonel Thomson of the Dutch gendarmerie came, as an emissary of the Prince, to Southern Albania for the purpose of treating with Zographos. “It would be a shame for us Europeans,” said he, when he was back in Durazzo, “it would be a shame if the Epirotes are put under the Albanian Government, for that region is much more civilised.” Prince William,

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we believe, acknowledged that there was much truth in this, but the Princess, together with the Moslem beys, held out against the grant of freedom to the Epirotes.

Nevertheless they did obtain what practically was their independence, when the representatives of the Powers assembled at Corfu and accepted the Epirotes' terms, which were as follows :

1. Northern Epirus is autonomous.
2. It recognises Prince William as its legal sovereign.
3. It sends deputies to the Albanian Parliament.
4. The official language of North Epirus is Greek.
5. In the Orthodox communities the language of the schools shall be Greek, with Albanian taught concurrently in the three elementary classes.
6. The Epirotes have their own militia under their own officers, and, save in the case of war or of revolution in the southern provinces, no non-native military units can be transferred to or employed in those parts.

Special provision is made for the heroic district of Himarra, to which we shall elsewhere make reference.

On June 23, 1914, M. Zographos was officially informed by the International Commission that the Albanian Government had just accepted, wholly and unconditionally, the pact of Corfu. But the elevation of Albania to the dignity of an independent State had not, as M. Gauvain remarked,¹

¹ Cf. *L'Europe au jour le jour*. Paris, 1918.

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been able to change the character or the customs of its inhabitants. Even without the European war the country was sinking back into its original chaos, and in December—the distracted Mpret having fled—there were no less than six simultaneous régimes : the region of Scutari was governed by a local Commission of Christians and Mussulmans ; the Mirditi remained more or less independent under the command of Prenk Bib Doda ; the Malissori of the north kept themselves apart ; Valona and Northern Epirus were occupied by Italy and Greece ; while Essad Pasha reigned without governing in Durazzo.

With regard to Northern Epirus, the British Minister at Athens, in the name of the Governments of the Entente Powers, asked the Greek Government if it would be disposed to undertake a fresh military occupation, with a view to re-establishing order sufficiently to permit the Muhammedans who had taken refuge at Valona to return to their homes before the winter and cultivate their lands. It was to be understood that the definite settlement of the question of Northern Epirus would be reserved for the Peace Congress. The Greek Government replied that it accepted this mandate if the consent of the Italian Government be also forthcoming. Under the auspices of Great Britain an agreement was arrived at by which Italy would occupy Valona and Greece Northern Epirus, the duty of pronouncing definitely as to these occupations being left to the Peace Congress. But it was tacitly understood that if, at the time of the general peace, the occupa-

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tion of Valona by Italy was confirmed, that of Northern Epirus by Greece would become equally definite.

In 1915 M. Venizelos was forced to resign, and, with Greece not as yet participating in the war, the Italians, under the pretext of protecting the Allied flank, occupied Northern Epirus. They drove out the Greek civil authorities, compelled the Greek schools to close, initiated a violent and unprecedented persecution of the Greek clergy, and imprisoned many of the inhabitants who refused to call themselves either Italians or Albanians. The pupils of the superior classes who wished to follow the school courses at Jannina or other Greek towns were unable to go there, as they were included in the regulation which forbade departure from the occupied territory except for reasons approved by the Italian authorities. Italian and Albanian teachers were sent to replace the Greeks, this being a repetition of the efforts made in Turkish days, when the Italians were so anxious that the Epirotes should cease to attend the Greek schools that they not only subsidised Italian schools and teachers, but also offered to pay every Epirote's child that attended their schools. They likewise guaranteed that graduates from the Italian schools would receive profitable positions with Italian firms; but nevertheless the Epirotes did not patronise these foreign schools, because they saw in them institutions which aimed at the denationalisation of Epirus. Unsuccessful in these attempts, the Italians made the lives of the Epirotes who resisted

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them a burden. Hundreds were exiled,¹ for such causes as the refusal to raise an Albanian flag. The gendarmerie was almost exclusively recruited among Muhammedans. The command of the detachments was entrusted to leaders of Albanian bands who were previously known for their persecution of Christians; they ground down the Christian peasants without mercy; they committed outrages without name. There is a long list of Christians who have been victims of the extortions, beatings and massacres committed by the Albanian units, armed and regularly incorporated by the Italians. When it was a question of sending these fine Albanian troops to the front, however, the numerous deserters formed themselves into bands of brigands who, a fresh scourge to the Christian population, devastated the country. The administration of justice, which was assured by Italian or Italo-Albanian courts, had to contend with local committees composed after the best methods of Albanian propaganda. All the Christians who were possessed of any substantial means had to pay blackmail to their Muhammedan accusers, in order to avoid judicial

¹ This policy has been carried on by the Albanians. From the time of the Armistice until the beginning of June 1922, those who had been compelled to leave the country and had taken refuge in Jannina consisted of 202 families (642 persons), those in Preveza consisted of 23 families (85 persons), and in various other towns 11 families (41 persons). Also in Korytza there were 65 families (175 persons), in Vostina 89 families (343 persons), and in Margariti 13 families (66 persons). The number of Epirotes who, between September 1921 and May 1922, were deported into the interior of Albania and massacred is known to be 26.

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proceedings. There is no known case of judgment having gone against one sole Muhammedan. . . . Naturally the autonomous régime of which Italy at Corfu had been one of the sponsors came to an end.

The region of Korytza fell, in the world war, under French administration, and here also an excessively pro-Albanian policy was pursued. From the day of their arrival the French appear to have reserved the public posts for men who had distinguished themselves by their hostility against Greek culture and the Greek Church; after the deplorable incidents which took place in Athens in November 1917, the French officers at Korytza did not make any secret of their purpose to wipe Greece from off the map of Europe. It seemed as though the official Greek attitude was being weighed against that of the Albanians; but were the Albanians such benevolent neutrals? Did not every bey, in accordance with his immemorial habits, play for his own hand? Did not, as a matter of fact, a considerably larger number of Albanians join the Austrian than the Entente forces? And when the French were good enough to found at Korytza a small Albanian republic, what was the dire result? . . . This republic, inaugurated in November 1916, was placed under one Themistokles, a moderately intelligent Albanian who had been an innkeeper at Monastir and in the war had been associated with the Austrians. A friend of Colonel Descoins, the French commanding officer, he proceeded to close the Greek schools and to open Albanian ones, which, however, were

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visited by not more than a hundred children. Thereupon the grecophils, who were the great majority of the Christian population, opened their own schools in several empty houses that were without tables or benches. The Chief of Police, a Frenchman called Dru, was requested by them to furnish these necessities, and he agreed to do so; but within a month Descoins ordered him to be sent away to Salonika. "I have laboured that your little republic," wrote Colonel Descoins to Harizi, the general secretary of the Korytza council of administration—"I have laboured that it should be a model State, a living proof of all that could be done in free and autonomous Albania." One of the chief activities of Themistokles and his friends was, under the eyes of the French, to gather money in every possible way, and, above all, by their methods of distributing corn and maize to the people. Justin Godart, the French ex-Under Secretary of Hygiene, who was so sumptuously received by the Albanians, and who returned the compliment by writing a fatuous book about them, says that under Greek diplomatic pressure the Republic of Korytza came to an end after fourteen months of existence. But, says he, it "had lived long enough to prove that the Albanians are capable of carrying on an economical and orderly administration." Somehow or other Monsieur Godart has omitted to state that His Excellency Themistokles had also lived long enough, and that, having been convicted of being an Austrian spy, he was taken out by the French and hanged. Several of his friends suffered

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the same fate ; but, after all, they were more guilty than his brother, who in 1915 had been thrown by fellow-Albanians into the Lake of Ochrida at Pogradec because he was a member of what in their opinion was the wrong political party. Those friends of Themistokles were duly hanged, and one of them paid tribute to his leader's volubility, for, on being asked if he objected to a set speech by Themistokles, " By no means," he answered ; " but hang me first. . . ." After this the French military administration was restored and the inhabitants were free to express their sentiments. They immediately reopened their Greek schools, and the pupils—well over 2000, as before the Balkan War—flocked back again, while the Albanian school could not attract more than 200.

Monsieur Godart does not, incredible as it may sound, breathe a word throughout his book concerning the Vatra of Korytza. The Albanian society of that name (in their language it means " the hearth "), which was instituted in the United States at Boston, appears to have no connection with the Vatra of Korytza, seeing that the *Dielli*, an Albanian newspaper appearing at Boston, has expressed the wish that the Korytza society should change its name in order not to bring dishonour on the name of Vatra. A political society of chauvinists, that is the Vatra of Korytza ; its president is the second son of Mustapha effendi Mboria. One of its aims has been to place its own members in every branch of the public service. If the Tirana Government sends an order which dis-

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pleases the Vatra, a report is sent back saying that the population of Korytza is against this order. If the prefect is a *persona ingrata* to the Vatra he very soon finds that it is necessary for him to abandon his post. But Justin Godart does not omit to say that when the French troops were departing the Greeks' appetite was roused; for they thought, says he, that amid the local confusion, and profiting from the fact that the Great Powers were paying more attention to other fields, they would be able to occupy Korytza, and "historically," says this fantastic person, "Epirus and Albania are one country. The truth is that *Southern Epirus* (our italics) should be called South Albania." The Baron d'Estournelles de Constant, in his Introduction to M. Godart's book, assures us that his friend has not merely rendered a service to the Albanians in exhibiting his sympathy for them and his consideration, but that he has likewise been of service to the Serbian, Greek and Italian Governments "en allant promener là-bas, tout simplement, une conscience; celle d'un homme politique absolument indépendant. J'estime qu'il a droit à notre reconnaissance. Son livre, que je suis heureux de recommander au public de bonne foi, est l'œuvre sincère, sérieuse, désintéressée, qu'on pouvait attendre de lui." One would like to ask M. Godart why the Greeks should not have an appetite for a district which even the Italian Foreign Minister, the Marquis di San Giuliano, had acknowledged to be Greek, and which in a few years,¹ and after the

¹ January 1920.

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most careful investigation, was allotted to Greece by the Governments of Great Britain, France, the United States and Italy.

But when the French evacuated Korytza and when the Italians left Argyrocastro, it was not to the Greeks that they handed over and not to the autonomous Government of Northern Epirus, which they had themselves admitted at Corfu to be the righteous master of that land. No; it was given up to the Albanians.

To follow all the marches and counter-marches in the two sandjaks would be tedious; but a memorable date is that of 1919, when the Peace Conference examined minutely the question of Argyrocastro and Korytza, with the result that the British and French delegations pronounced themselves in favour of attributing these provinces to Greece; they recognised that statistics based on religion and language were not very valuable, and that the delimitation of the frontier in 1913, which included these regions in Albania, had been unacceptable to very important elements. (How terribly this judgment must have hurt M. Justin Godart, who, without any reservation, says in his book that Greece has no right whatsoever to Korytza or Argyrocastro! He severely rebukes them for endeavouring to gain their neighbour's property and says that any right they might possess has surely been diminished by their sinister manœuvres.) The delegates were also impressed by the exposition given by Venizelos and Karapanos with regard to the hellenophil sentiments of the majority of the population,—

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one example of which was the failure of the Italian general, Rossi, in March 1919, at Argyrocastro, to persuade the Christian notables to sign petitions in favour of an Albano-Italian régime (only half a dozen consented to do so),—and by the economic importance of the great highway uniting Santi Quaranta to Korytza. The British delegates placed it on record that they were also influenced by the opinion that, for political and strategic reasons, it would be inequitable for Greece and for Serbia to permit so vital a point as Korytza to come under the control of another European Power. In July 1919 a pact was signed between Venizelos and Tittoni, in which the consent of Italy was likewise given ; and after some hesitation, apparently due to the efforts of one or two pro-Albanian missionaries at Korytza, the American Government did not persist in their untenable theories, which had been based on the possibility of Korytza being able to thrive in the Albanian State on account of the construction of a road from Valona *via* Premeti.

Thus it came about that in January 1920 the Greek Government was officially informed that Argyrocastro and Korytza were to come under their rule except for two districts, that of Tepeleni and Klisura, as well as that to the north and north-west of Korytza, which are chiefly inhabited by Moslems and were for this reason, and at the suggestion of M. Venizelos, allotted to Albania. But that decision of the Supreme Council was reversed in the following year by the Ambassadors' Conference. This may seem to require some explanation. Well,

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the British Foreign Office wrote in September 1921 to the Greek Legation in London that they could not admit that the Ambassadors' Conference, in reverting to the former frontier laid down in Florence, were acting *ultra vires*. On the contrary, the Foreign Office held that the Conference had "every right and authority to come to any decisions required by present conditions." They held that the decision of January 1920, "if decision it can be called, was only an agreement on the part of the other Powers to accept the Venizelos-Tittoni arrangement of July 1919. This agreement, however, was invalidated owing to the non-fulfilment of certain conditional clauses, and with it also lapsed the decision of the Supreme Council, which had been based upon its continued validity."

Now it is quite true that Italy had, in consequence of her changed Albanian policy, set her face against the Venizelos-Tittoni agreement. She did not officially denounce it—I believe she made a merely verbal objection at Spa. And as a proof that this agreement was not considered to be abrogated, we have the fact that in August 1920 another agreement was signed between Italy and Greece with reference to the Dodecanese, so that only that portion of the former agreement was annulled. At the San Remo Conference the Venizelos-Tittoni agreement was still considered by the Supreme Council as valid. . . . In July 1920 Sir Eyre Crowe had stated to the Greek Minister in London that the Italian Government had the right under Article 7 to denounce the

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Venizelos-Tittoni agreement, but that they should have done so before the execution of Article 122 of the Turkish treaty. Sir Eyre said in the same month that this action of the Italians would bring about the wreckage of the whole treaty with Turkey; the British Government would therefore not sign the Turkish treaty. Later on, however, the British attitude was modified; she signed the treaty, but said she would not sign the tripartite agreement (between Italy, France and herself) respecting economic spheres in Asia Minor. This agreement gave to Italy the sphere of influence to the east of the Greek sphere of occupation, which, in the Venizelos-Tittoni negotiations, had been assigned to Greece. Subsequently she again altered her attitude, signed this tripartite treaty, but said that Greece should only recognise it if the Venizelos-Tittoni agreement was accepted by Italy. One supposes that Great Britain wished to counter the Italian claims on Valona and Sasseno; there was a close connection at the time between the Albanian and the Asia Minor problems, so that the Greek armies on the plateaux of Asia Minor were fighting to have the Acroceraunian Mountains as the frontier of Greece and Albania.

It will be asked why the Ambassadors' Conference acted as it did in 1921. Perhaps the decision of 1920 was considered to have lapsed on account of the non-fulfilment of the clauses regarding Fiume. But how could the failure of the Fiume arrangement between Italy and the Serb-Croat-Slovene State (which, moreover, was afterwards regulated at

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Rapallo) affect the validity of the Supreme Council decisions as between Italy and another State? Also, it may be argued that the Ambassadors' Conference could, if they wished, reverse the decision of January 1920 because Italy had repudiated the Venizelos-Tittoni agreement. But even a formal denunciation would have had no influence on the validity of the decision of the Supreme Council. We may therefore say that the Greek Government has abundant reason to complain of the manner in which the Ambassadors' Conference has settled the Albanian question. All fair-minded persons should support her claim to that considered judgment of 1920; it was based on a careful and impartial study of the conditions in the two sandjaks of Argyrocastro and Korytza. The statesmen of Europe have declined to walk on that path of righteousness which their own experts had constructed, and populations whom they honourably rescued they have cynically now condemned. . . . Greece has solemnly and more than once engaged herself, says M. Justin Godart, to respect the judgments of the Ambassadors' Conference and the League of Nations. "Now the hour has come for her to recognise the force of Justice."

We have spoken of the sorry weakness of the British Government, but France and Italy did not even try to stand up for that which they had previously recognised as just. Without identifying these Governments with their Press, it is nevertheless very remarkable that the semi-official French

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newspapers of the period were practically unanimous in refusing to admit that any alterations from the frontiers of 1913 should be made in favour of Greece. I quote from Mr Temperley's book, *The Second Year of the League*, which is as well informed as it is humorous and lucid. The Italian Press, says he, heartily endorsed this standpoint, but went much further. Not only did it entirely refuse concessions to Greece, but it asserted that no alteration whatever should or could be made in these frontiers of 1913. At the same time, with absurd inconsistency, the Italian Press demanded that the island of Sasseno should belong to Italy. This demand was ludicrous, because the Italian representative at the original decisions of 1913 had demanded that Sasseno should be included in Albania. Now, apparently, Albania was to have the frontiers of 1913. No one was allowed to infringe them. But Italy, an exception to this rule, was to have Sasseno. . . . The frontiers of 1913 in the Argyrocastro region handed over, as Mr Temperley observes,—and no one is in a better position to know,—many thousands of Greeks and grecophils to Albania, and she was in point of fact extremely fortunate to have this award confirmed by the decision of 1921. It is evident that she herself thought so, for on the news (not official) reaching Albania that she was to receive Argyrocastro, fêtes were organised by the Government to celebrate this event. It is singular, says Mr Temperley, that this concession to Albanian sentiment, which was a violation of the ethnic principle,

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in no way induced the Albanians or their British supporters to moderate their claims elsewhere. . . . The Albanians, says he, seem to have been induced to "stick out" for the frontiers of 1913 largely owing to the vociferous support of their misguided though sincere albanophil friends in England.

The League of Nations, so kind to Albania, caused her to sign a solemn Declaration on September 22, 1921, which was, in effect, a Minorities Treaty. One article provided that "within six months from the date of the present Declaration detailed information will be presented to the Council of the League of Nations with regard to the legal status of the religious communities, churches, convents, schools, voluntary establishments, and associations of racial, religious, and linguistic Minorities. The Albanian Government will take into account any advice it may receive from the League of Nations with regard to this question." In that same month certain things happened to the schools at Korytza. Under the dispensation of Themistokles, one Viska Poulia, the Minister of Public Instruction, an ex-teacher at an elementary school, and likewise his Muhammedan successor, made attempts to force the villages of the neighbourhood to have Albanian schools, but in the town the Greek schools managed to survive. In September 1921, however, all the Greek elementary schools and the secondary schools were shut. It would be interesting to know whether this was duly reported to the League of Nations.

III

VIEWING ALBANIA

ON a previous visit to Albania, to the northern parts of that country, a Yorkshire friend of mine and I had not been helped by the Albanian authorities. Of course we had no wish to get our information solely from official sources ; we frequented them, and likewise those which criticised them—merchants, priests, and politicians ; and the Government—remembering that several other foreigners had not explored these various channels—came to the conclusion that our motive must be sinister, and as we had arrived from Yugoslavia it was assumed we must be secret Yugoslav agents. More than one functionary in Scutari was kind enough to tell us that some other functionary harboured these suspicions. A competent Yugoslav Consulate existed there ; but young Ahmed Beg Mati, the Governor,—he was also Minister of the Interior and commandant of the military forces,—seemed to imagine that we two strangers, who had come to study the local conditions, knew more about them and were consequently more dangerous than the whole Yugoslav staff, including the vastly experienced dragoman. It was perfectly absurd ; but the same thing had happened to the special correspondent of a New York paper. The Albanian authorities had told

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him he must go, despite his plans, from there to Italy and not to Yugoslavia. That procedure was adopted towards ourselves : in order to make sure that we would not go the forbidden route, His Excellency Ahmed Beg declined to give us back our passports. Sometimes he would take them with him to the front ; sometimes he would be so deep in council that his secretaries could not trouble him with such a mundane matter ; and when he emerged,—a slender, pale, aloof young man, frock-coated, and so plunged in thought that he passed like a shadow through the bowing ranks of his retainers,—who can doubt that if we had addressed him we should have infringed Albanian etiquette ? As we preferred to go back *via* Yugoslavia,—a car from the American hospital at Podgorica was to take us through the Montenegrin Mountains to Dubrovnik,—we decided, after vainly trying to persuade the officials that if we were potentially so injurious to the Government it scarcely mattered whether we arrived in Yugoslavia after twenty minutes or after a few days spent in crossing and re-crossing the Adriatic, we decided at last to abandon our passports and leave, if possible, on a canoe manned by a couple of inconspicuous gypsies. But while they waited for us in a reedy place they happened to be noticed by a lynx-eyed guardian of the frontier, who expelled them under the belief—probably quite justified—that they were smugglers ; and later in the same afternoon, when we embarked on the Bojana River in the boat of an old fisherman and pushed off for the other side and Yugoslavia,

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seven or eight gendarmes rushed down towards the bank flourishing revolvers, and the old man brought his boat back to the shore ; which was most wise, as none of us were armed, and, according to Mr Reginald Wyon,¹ “ a man’s life in Albania is worth one penny, as an educated Albanian once told me—that being roughly the price of a cartridge.” Even so he had to suffer a tornado of abuse for his behaviour, though the poor old innocent had only taken us on board to do a little fishing. We had been repeatedly informed at Scutari that our offence consisted chiefly in not having an Albanian *visa* on our passports. We had mentioned that in neither London, Paris nor Belgrade, nor anywhere else except Constantinople, was there an Albanian Consul from whom a *visa* could be obtained ; but they merely repeated that we had come without one. Twice we had to make the journey from Scutari to San Giovanni di Medua, for on the first occasion we missed the steamer by a few yards—it was one that called at a Yugoslav port, a fact which the authorities seemed to have overlooked ; but when the Italian crew stood up and jeered at our rowing-boat while their own vessel, which we had almost reached, steamed rapidly away, it was clear that the authorities had taken all the necessary steps. The journey back to Scutari inside the post-carriage, a rickety vehicle, was rendered more unpleasant by the songs which during all those six hours were sung, chiefly in falsetto, by the desperate-looking postman, the driver who produced at intervals a

¹ Cf. *Blackwood’s Magazine*, April 1903.

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horrid laugh, and the most filthy of gendarmes who had our passports underneath his tunic. But when in a few days we found ourselves back again at malarial San Giovanni, and the gendarme as we stood upon the steamer's deck gave up our passports, I believe that we had gathered more information about the country—even if we looked at it through jaundiced glasses—than one of those travellers who are satisfied with what the Government tells them.

Therefore, since it is troublesome to seek for data in Albania if you set about it openly, and since I had no intention of travelling like the Frenchman Godart, attended by the music of governmental bands, or like Monsieur Auguste Pittard, the Swiss, with whom the authorities were so pleased that, for instance, they called a street after him in Premeti, since I wanted on my second journey to be spared the persecution and also the incense, I resolved to go as an industrial explorer. Some weeks previously, at Sparta, I had struck up an acquaintance with one Peter Coumas, a most kindly little man who, like so many others of that region, had lived in the United States. I am not quite clear about the occupation Peter followed, for the card he gave me had these words upon it :

PETER COUMAS,

Adviser of All Affairs.

We are organised as we walk and act. The way this earth is built is known, all others is organs, only we are the best.

One woman to every American soldier who goes to Europe to give the other woman their efforts in everything.

\$1.00 FOR EACH 20 MINUTE LESSON.

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But at the back of it he wrote: "Visit river Pistriga clos Delvinon N. Epirus. Very interestet. a Factory ther for Hilecrisity is nesasery Plesse do it." In other words he wanted me to set about the installation of an electric plant in the river near Delvino, which is an agreeable little town that lies between Santi Quaranta and Argyrocastro. Peter tramped beside me all the way to Mistrà, that old, gloriously-situated place of Frank and Byzantine and Turkish ruins. He was so entirely sympathetic that he almost wept as I related my ordeal of the previous night, when the most renowned hotels in Sparta—which is a modern, rather unattractive spot—had all been full, and after much perambulation in the rain I had been given half of a small room whose door required a stone to keep it shut, while the flapping window had to have another stone to keep it open; luckily the light which floated in a glass of oil was so extremely ineffective that my room-companion—a very honest civil servant, they assured me—did not notice that the window at the far end of the room was open; or perhaps the goodman did notice it and for that reason divested himself only of his overcoat and boots before he lay him down. As in the rain we walked to Mistrà Peter Coumas was unhappy owing to the conduct of the landlord of that hostelry, for when I got up in the morning and referred to his intelligence because he finally produced a metal basin but no drop of water, then my host—who incidentally had been insulted through my showing him an envelope (he could not read)—my host

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struck up a splendid attitude and ordered me to leave his house. Yet subsequently he became much calmer and not merely let me dress, but undertook to keep my luggage while I went to find another room, and ultimately was quite gracious when I paid the few pence which he charged me.

"I am very grieved," said Peter Coumas, "but this Sparta is a hell place. When you go up there to South Albania—we call it North Epirus—you will find it is bad likewise. Those fellows can't do nothing."

He begged me to introduce British capital in large quantities to that region. Otherwise he really couldn't say what would happen. "A thousand times those people would be glad to have the British there," quoth he.

He had no personal interests in South Albania—his father and he lived on the ancestral farm an hour's walk from Sparta, while his mother and five brothers and a sister tarried in Ohio—but he felt, as if they had been his own, the sorrows of the Christian population. Nevertheless he said he would not trouble me with them that afternoon; I would be seeing for myself, and now it would be better if he told me things about this neighbourhood. He knew quite well the reputation of each orange orchard that we passed, and his charming intimacy with the trees was even more remarkable than that of an old English planter I once visited near Jalapa in the State of Vera Cruz in Mexico. That gentleman was pleased to take his little, heavy-laden trees to task—"You ruffian! You bit of mischief!"

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he would say—but, after all, the trees belonged to him, while those that were a million lamps on each side of the rain-swept road to Mistrà never had belonged to Peter Coumas. Him I have to thank for many things. When the four good ladies of the Mistrà convent were preparing for us Turkish coffee and large bowls of milk I whispered to my friend to tell me from what animal the milk had emanated. “Ho!” said he, “that’s mutton milk.” And on the way home he related that there only were three cows in all the district and the milk from them was taken under medical advice. Of course he knew the farmers who possessed the cows, he knew the names they had bestowed on them and sundry other features, physical and intellectual.

But what have I done, Peter, in return? I acted on your sage recommendation and during all my stay in South Albania talked about the various enterprises—woollen factories, electric stations, and I know not what—which ought to be established there. It would have otherwise been scarcely possible to meet as many people of divergent views and interests as I did; and now I must apologise to those whose time I wasted—for example the prefect of Korytza, who, with an engineer, a friend, and a gendarme, drove out with me to see a racing river with a most terrific horse-power. From the point at which the road stopped we were forced to go about two miles on foot, through clinging mud and over many rocks. The prefect was unused to exercise; he suffered greatly, but he told me the next morning, when he gave me a typed

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memorandum of the horse-power both in winter and in summer, that he hadn't slept so well for years. I must apologise to the reader for such a chapter of personal affairs, since he has taken up this book to see what it could tell him about South Albania and not to learn about the mask I wore and how I came to wear it. I apologise to all those people in Albania for whom my conversation about industries must have been often just as much a nuisance as it was for me.

"We are awfully respectful, excellently respectful," said the stalwart Moslem chauffeur of a car between Leskovik and Erseka. "We Albanians in America subscribed to give Miss Edith Durham a gold fountain-pen."

It was not with a presentation pen that the brother of Sirri Bey Vlora wrote, on August 16, 1921, a letter from the Riviera to a friend of mine. Perhaps the writer was prejudiced because his brother, a notable of Valona, had been summoned to the mayor's office and killed in broad daylight as he came out, probably because, being careful of his cash, he had refused to help the indigent State. "Albania," says the brother—I translate from his poor French—"is the country of disorder and thieves. What would you, my dear friend, for I am old and as for the last few years of life which I have left, I must pass them in peace. My compatriots see themselves in the mirror of giants; they steal, pillage, and try to form a Government with the remains of Ottoman corruption."

In the very same month Monsieur Pittard, who

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was shepherded by the Albanian authorities—for example, the population of places through which he passed were compelled by the police to cry “Long live Albania!”—Monsieur Pittard in the course of one of his speeches said that Europe had a false idea of this country. He would do everything in his power to help them—(I believe this Swiss gentleman made a report to the Foreign Affairs Committee in Paris)—he would help them, seeing that, he said, he saw with interest that Albanians were civilised.

Who of us can say that he purveys the truth? But if I have got no nearer than Miss Durham, Monsieur Pittard, Monsieur Justin Godart and others who are hand in glove with the Albanian Government, I have at least had more diversion out of my researches. In the zone which till the end of 1921 was occupied by the Yugoslavs there dwelt a Moslem priest, a hodja, who took upon himself to slay a gentleman against whose family he was “in vengeance”; as this gentleman was his parishioner he thereupon performed the funeral service. Monsieur Pittard does not know that in concluding his address he cried “Long live Albania!” And lest anyone should think that this was an abnormal kind of Moslem priest in Albania I would refer you to the Krasniči of the north, where the incumbent is a well-known relative of Bairam Zur. It has happened more than once that he has had to bury one of his parishioners whom he has caused to die. The family may make an effort to secure a priest from some near village,

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but no other clergyman will come, because he knows the parish priest would be so hurt by this intrusion and would lie in wait, with his associates, behind a wall. An arrangement is therefore made whereby the parish priest is given a *besa* for three days; this enables him to go among the bereaved family, conduct the service, pray and eat and drink with them, receive the customary small remuneration, and depart. He always takes good care on such occasions to remove himself before the end of the three days, for if he should outstay the *besa* he would certainly be killed. . . . Any Mussulman, so Monsieur Godart tells us, " may assume the title and the duties of a hodja ; all that he has to do is to attract the faithful to himself by his virtues and his piety."

IV

THE TWO CLERGYMEN

A GOOD many persons, I suppose, have the most enviable capacity of not observing the demerits of their friends or any virtues in the composition of their enemies. Unshaken by the slightest doubt as to the spotlessness and villainy of these two parties they think very little of them. Now there will be people who believe that since the Christians in South Albania are persecuted and the Metropolitan of Korytza, Archbishop Jacob, was expelled, he must therefore, in the eyes of all good Christians, be a very worthy man, if not much more. Yet we should also try to look at him as if we were Albania's Government—at any rate we shall learn more about him. They declare that he is Greek, and that he actively engaged in pro-Greek propaganda, which they could not tolerate. This remarkable prelate—he is only about forty-five years of age—was born in Asia Minor and certainly is Greek. During the European War he was at Durazzo, from which place the Austrians—regarding him as too Ententophil and well aware of his statesmanlike qualities—removed him to Vienna. When the war was ended the Italians declined to let him go back to Durazzo, so that he was given the Korytza diocese. The Christians there, as we have said

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before, cling by a large majority—it seems four-fifths of them—to their Greek-language schools and churches. Nor is it surprising when we recollect that hitherto this has been practically the sole language which the Christians have employed for these two purposes, the language which admittedly they speak at home not being capable as yet of executing such a task. It is not a parallel case—when indeed has history been known to repeat itself?—but as a rough comparison we may regard some eminent divine who has gone out from England to a church in the United States and who encounters one of those terrific waves of American emotion which have no room for compromises. Imagine one of their prophets—a perfectly honest and narrow man—to have conceived the idea that an old American language, say that of the Sioux Indians, must supplant the English tongue. Let us for the sake of argument agree that he has a very good case and that American national dignity demands the cultivation of this language. The Washington Cabinet has been caught up in the mighty rush of enthusiasm, and agitated patriots up and down the country are feeling like that horse in *Borrow* which exclaimed “Ha! Ha!” The schools and churches are to be the pioneers of this great movement; they are forthwith to be filled with the delicious native music of Sioux. It will be pointed out, however, by the same majority that there should be a period of transition, during which both English and Sioux must flourish side by side, for it would not be well entirely to abandon an accustomed foreign instrument until their own instru-

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ment has been made less clumsy, and they less clumsy in wielding it. Among these careful members of the community there would be our friend the Anglican divine; but because he is ardent in his advocacy of the English language it does not in the least follow that he desires the political union of Great Britain and the United States. Archbishop Jacob was extremely well aware that his flock were not Greeks but Albanians, that they did not as a whole desire to be in Greece—of course, if the unwisdom, to use a mild word, of the dominating Moslem forces them into the arms of Greece, that is another matter. The Archbishop was strenuous in maintaining, like most of the faithful, that there should be no complete and sudden and disastrous revolution in the language of the school and church. Since he was a very formidable champion of his people it was necessary, said the Government, to clear him out.¹ They used a motor car, which evidently struck the League of Nations' delegates as most commendable, since it is emphasised in their report. And his expulsion, said the delegates, did not apparently cause any demonstration either in his favour or against him. But do these sorry delegates not

¹ The chief of the gendarmerie who undertook this task was one Ferid bey of the Frasheri family. In the old days he was, at any rate the Turkish authorities regarded him as, a bandit, and three of his followers were killed by them. It may be urged that he was one of those romantic persons, the brave "heiducks," who in other Balkan countries championed their poor fellow-countrymen against the Turkish tyrants; but it is not known that Ferid bey gave any of his plunder to the poor. Now, as captain of gendarmerie, he is stationed at Tirana.

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realise that by recording this they have acknowledged that the people sympathised with their Archbishop? "He had made himself very unpopular," said the delegates, accepting, as if it were manna, what the Albanian Government, or perhaps Veaute, the Chief of Police, had told them. But if he truly was disliked would not the people have rejoiced at his departure? To manifest their grief would not have been a very safe proceeding. It is not disputed that His Grace is a young man of much distinction, to whose piety and learning and administrative powers we have so many zealous witnesses; and still more numerous are they who testify to his great charm of manner. There does not seem any reason why we should reject the statement which in Korytza is heard so often, that it seems surprising how these delegates could close their ears to it, the statement that His Grace was deeply loved.

Now let us consider him who calls himself Fan Noli. This ecclesiastic is a member of the same church as Archbishop Jacob and he aspires to found a separate Albanian Orthodox Church, so that Albania, like the other Balkan countries, will be freed from the religious jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarch. Time was when the Patriarch, residing at Constantinople, was the spiritual head of Serbs, Roumanians and Bulgars. It was natural that gradually these people should desire to emancipate themselves, and if the Orthodox Albanians similarly wish to have their own autocephalous church they must of course not be denied. The energetic leader of the movement is the priest Fan Noli, a

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swarthy, bustling and intelligent man. Not only does he take the foremost place in this affair, but he has largely moulded the relations which exist between his country and the outside world. At the Geneva Conference towards the end of 1921 he had a good deal of success, for instance with Lord Robert Cecil, being aided by his fluency in French and English and his most ingratiating ways. But let us go back for a moment to the question of Albania's independent church. His aspirations plainly are not shared by more than a small number of the Orthodox Albanians. Those who are against him, priests and laymen, argue that the time is not yet ripe for such a step. But the Reverend Fan Noli has insisted, wherever he can do so, on the churches superseding Greek in favour of the undeveloped language of Albania. "Some of our folk," I was told by a Fan Noli partisan, "some of our folk are too conservative—you can't do anything with such old fellows, but we are expecting them to die." Yet, as for those Albanians, men and women, who are steadily opposed to interference in their church, and who are consequently flogged not seldom by the Mussulman police, one would not say that those Albanians are too conservative who are reluctant to embark in such a palpably unfinished vessel and with such a poor supply of officers; nor that their average age would let us think (if the police grow not more vigorous) that they will predecease the other party.

It is possible that Fan Noli is an Albanian; there are Albanian villages near Adrianople. But when he left the village of Ibrik-Tepe, in the

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year 1900 his name was Theophanus Mavromatis, which is Greek. A petition came to the governing body of the high school at Adrianople with reference to this young man. The kindly person, one Vergadis, who presented it, explained that Theophanus, an assistant in an ironmonger's shop, had had some trouble at his school, but being a youth of promise who had no material resources Vergadis said that he would be most grateful if the good professors would accept him. This they did, and some years afterwards we hear of him in Egypt, where he uttered speeches that were Greek and patriotic. He then emigrated to America, became a shop assistant and worked very hard. His next move was into the Church; the Russian bishop, who at that time was the spiritual father of all the Greek Orthodox Christians in the States, consented to ordain him, and the new priest thereupon adopted his Albanian name, though one of his former Adrianople professors is of the opinion that Fan Noli is less of an Albanian than himself. But if the young priest really said that he was the St Cyril and St Method of Albania, and that he translated the Holy Writ (which Theodore Caveliotris translated as far back as 1732) into Albanian, he was allowing his enthusiasm to run away with him. At Whitsuntide 1918 he appeared in New York before an assembly of Christian and Moslem Albanians. He told them that there was a general desire to have a true Albanian bishop, but that Greek intrigues had vetoed this. (The Russian Church authorities had said, quite rightly, that he was under the jurisdiction of the Greek Patriarch.) "Well!" he cried—

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and his friends were prudently scattered among the audience—"what shall we do?" "The people," they answered, "the people can elect kings, they can elect bishops!" "What shall we do?" cried Fan Noli. "You shall be our bishop!" Thereupon he retired, it is said, and coming back in episcopal robes he was hailed by the people with cries of "Ἀξίος! Ἀξίος!" ("He is worthy!") And as he gave the benediction they crossed themselves, except the Moslems, who, *bien entendu*, saluted in their own fashion. It must have been a spectacle worth going very far to see; I hope that the romantic circumstances have not left their mark upon this version of the tale. At all events if it is false that Monsignor, living afterwards in a large house with one or two secretaries, comported himself as a bishop, his adherents for a long time in America and elsewhere gave him this title; but now they wisely seem to have abandoned it. In March 1920 he came to Albania, but received a tepid welcome from the Muhammedan inhabitants of Durazzo. What was he to do? The deputies were being chosen, and he managed to be made the representative of those Albanians who live in the United States. He became the ecclesiastical statesman who so often flourishes in relatively primitive communities. He holds that a State whose political independence is recognised has *ipso jure* the right to have an independent Church. Yes, but the members of the Church must claim that right. So this brave gentleman from Greece is more uncompromisingly Albanian than most of the Albanians will ever be.

V

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IN the middle of a dull spring afternoon in the year 1922 at Argyrocastro we were talking about schools and other things. One side of the bare room we sat in consisted chiefly of windows, so that what was passing in the little cobbled square was plainly visible. A good many of those who lounged there, or who went about their business, had an Oriental aspect: benignant-looking patriarchs in baggy trousers, picturesque vendors of dilapidated sweetmeats, a youngish man who was doing his best not to look a superior person, although the green cloth round his fez showed that he had been to Mecca. The Christian members of the population were altogether less noticeable; and as one watched the smart officers saluting one another in the Turkish fashion one began to feel oneself in Turkey, the more so as among the passers-by there was scarcely a single woman.

This town, as a matter of fact, contains about 8000 Moslem and 2000 Christian Albanians. It has one of the most extraordinary situations, being built on the upper parts of three steep hills which rise up from the plain and resemble three enormous flying buttresses against the mountain side.

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As one motors up the central buttress by a curving road it is as if one were progressing up the finger of a giant. And the proud position of their city seems to have affected the predominating Moslem, who is said to be peculiarly fanatic. With scorn he looks down at the row of Christian villages which in the plain lie to the south, between Argyrocastro and the Greek frontier. But of the Christians in the town a few have willingly and some unwillingly allied themselves with the oppressor. It may not sound heroic of those Christians who have no other source of livelihood and who for the sakes of their wives and children take some post under this Government which they abominate; but how can we blame them, knowing that if they take shelter in Greece their families will be forcibly detained and left to starve by the Albanian authorities? Not in this way should we regard the Christians who have joyously thrown in their lot with the Moslem tyrant—and these individuals are, as one would expect, even more fanatic than their confederates. Suffice it to mention two of them: Tromara, the notorious prefect, of whom we shall speak elsewhere, and Pope Panos, an elderly priest, who noticed that several of his co-religionists were sitting talking with us in the low-ceilinged room at the side of one of Argyrocastro's little squares; he came into our midst and plaintively told us about himself. Before he came we had been talking of the schools.

"It is years since we were allowed to have our Greek schools," said one of my acquaintances—

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for obvious reasons I can give no names. It is distasteful thus to envelope my investigations with a meretricious air of mystery, but the peril of those who are at the mercy of the Albanian Government is great enough in all conscience.

“ How long is it since your schools were closed ? ”

I asked.

“ During the Italian occupation—you know they came to these parts in the war. It was in October 1916 that they seized the opportunity offered them by the internal complications in Greece. The great highway from Santi Quaranta to Korytza and all the country round about it was occupied. At first General Bandidi issued a proclamation to assure us that he had merely come for military purposes and that all our religious, educational and other rights would be respected. What did we see ? Apart from the matter of the schools, I will tell you what the Italians did—steps were taken to enforce the collection of taxes and custom-dues ; administrators of the forests issued licences for periods of from six to ten years ; and with the Italian army came a horde of miscellaneous functionaries and schoolmasters. In fact, a furious campaign was started against the Greek schools, and everything possible was done to replace them by Italo-Albanian institutions.”

“ But if you are Albanians,” said I, “ what is the reason that you should have Greek schools ? ”

“ Unfortunately you do not know the Albanian language. It is in so elementary a state that you cannot even say in Albanian, ‘ I love.’ The

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shyest youth amongst us, if he goes a-courting in Albania, has to say, 'I want.' Parts of the language—those parts which are not Slav or Latin or Greek—were doubtless heard in the Balkan Peninsula before any other language which now prevails there. Words spoken by the Albanians of two thousand years ago are still employed. But a very ancient man has not for that reason a claim to our admiration. And a language which in all those years, whether through the fault of the Albanians or of the Turks, has achieved practically nothing, which has given to the world no single piece of literature which is worth remembering, no folk-song worthy to be sung, and which is now a very mongrel language and so primitive that cultured people speaking it have frequently to introduce a foreign word, one surely ought to hesitate before commanding that a schoolboy, who has hitherto been learning in the Greek tongue, should henceforward try to use this other and very clumsy weapon."

"We are Albanians—make no mistake about that," said a bearded, careworn man, "and in our own homes we speak Albanian, mingled with Greek. It is ridiculous to pretend that we are traitors, that we reject our own tongue. But, as my friend has been saying, it is nowadays a totally inadequate instrument. Perhaps in years it may become a cultured language. But as all our commerce has been carried on—it had to be—in Greek, that is the language which our boys have had to learn."

"A Moslem was telling me," said I, "that under

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the Turkish régime the Greek language was unfairly favoured here by the Government, because they were afraid of the extension of your national tongue. It is a fact, I believe, that they permitted the Greek schools and forbade any others ? ”

“ They permitted the Greek schools,” answered the bearded man, “ because they found that all their prohibitions were in vain, just as they were also gracious enough to permit the Serbs, the Bulgars and the Roumanians to have schools in their own language. And does it not strike you as rather comic to assert that the Albanians, alone of all the Balkan peoples, bowed to this repressive legislation ? For five hundred years the Turkish control of Albania was so nominal that scarcely any taxes were paid and scarcely any conscripts were furnished ; and yet these obstinate and independent folk obeyed without a murmur the command that they should not have their Albanian schools ! What can account for this extraordinary submission ? Remember that the Grand Vizier was often an Albanian, that Albanian troops were those on which the Sultan most relied—so that the Albanians who remained at home were not without their friends at court. And yet they did nothing. If they had insisted on establishing their schools, what would the Turks have done ? It would be interesting to ask an old Albanian what he thought in his youth when he perceived that the other Balkan peoples, on whom the Sultan could lay a far heavier hand, had succeeded in gaining their schools. In these people the national conscience was awakening and was

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irresistible. But the Albanians had no such thing—and how many of them to-day possess the slightest trace of one? If the Turk still ruled over the Balkans, you may be sure that the Albanian would be his very happy, privileged subject, quite content to let his language become more and more degenerate, and—worse than many savages—not caring in the least to have the schools, which they could have so easily established. And now, like a spoiled, profligate son at his father's death, they wish to have their own base speech around them: a child now for the first time going to school is to learn to write with this broken pen, and the other children whose education has been in Greek—what are they going to do?"

"But what are they doing?"

"It is the greatest tragedy. Europe has many problems, but not the least of them is of the hundreds and hundreds of boys in South Albania who at this moment are having a perpetual holiday. Those whose parents can arrange it are sent to schools outside the country. Large numbers are in the island of Corfu. But what of those who cannot go? What would you say if your son, hoping some day to be a professional man, were suddenly compelled to stop in the middle of his education?"

"Perhaps," said I, "this extreme nationalist policy will be tempered. A Government may come into power which will see that this abrupt reversal of the system of education is an outrage. The only possible method is to proceed gradually by dedicating certain hours a week to Albanian."

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“ But as it is,” said the bearded man, “ they have not only issued an absolute veto on any Greek tuition in the schools, but they visit with the severest penalties any teacher who dares to give private lessons or the father who procures him for his son. I wonder if that is generally known in Western Europe. That Frenchman, Justin Godart, who came here officially not long ago and was much fêted, has said in his book that Argyrocastro is ‘ un centre Musulman important, mais où règne la tolérance et la concorde.’ ”

Then I thought of a letter which a friend of mine had received a few weeks before in London from the President of the Anglo-Albanian Society. It did not seem to tally with the state of things at Argyrocastro. I told them that after this gentleman had written to the Press in order to exalt the Albanians for having set up schools for their minorities, my friend had ventured to ask him where these schools were situated. One of them, he replied, a Greek school, was at Argyrocastro.

“ But we have told you about that,” said a member of the company. “ We have had no Greek school since the time of the Italian occupation. Hush! Talk about other things. Here comes Pope Panos.”

Outside in the sunlight I saw a priest of melancholy aspect. But what was that to my condition? Here was the President of the Anglo-Albanian Society, the Hon. Aubrey Herbert, M.P. Here was the man to whom the population of Great Britain looked with touching confidence for their

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Albanian knowledge. Very probably in thousands and thousands of homes the breadwinner, torn this way and that way in these troublous times, was thanking God for having placed beneath his feet one solid rock, the full and perfect acquaintance with Albanian affairs. So often had the worthy citizen resolved to take his stand on something honourable and solid which a writer or an orator had put before him, only to be told by rival cicerones that if he stayed there he would sink inevitably into a morass; so often had he sought a different pedestal, no matter of what composition, where he could remain at last four-square to all the winds; and with ineffable relief he had been carried from the chaos on to that one isle—a small one, to be sure, but a most happy isle—that never would be traversed by doubts or other shadows. With such sublime authority and at such frequent intervals did the President of the Anglo-Albanian Society make his pronouncements that it would be impious to question them. Perhaps, however, this erroneous information touching the Greek school at Argyrocastro was an isolated lapse, and in that case the idol would not fall, but merely quiver. . . . I am sure that Monsieur D'Estournelles de Constant, Senator of France, would not consciously write that which is not true; but when in his glowing preface to Monsieur Godart's book, he tells us that Albania "has her schools in which people of all the religions and of all ages assemble, being imbued with one and the same national aspiration" he cannot have been thinking of

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Argyrocastro or of any other place which I visited or heard of.

Meanwhile, Father Panos had sat down amongst us and begun to take part in our conversation regarding the weather. But with his large, brown, apprehensive eyes he was looking uneasily about him, and presently he told us that for four years he had not been in a church. This was due, said he, to the lamentable obduracy of his co-religionists who would not have the Greek language superseded by the Albanian. How different was it on Easter day in 1917—*un si beau passé*!—when the Italians facilitated his journey from Roumania and appointed him to be a priest at Argyrocastro. He had sung the Mass in Albanian. It is true that the congregation rushed out of the church, but this disapproval of the Albanian language was drastically punished by the Italian authorities, who arrested forty of the wealthiest offenders. We were told after Father Panos' departure that he is the only priest of those parts who—like more than one of the Korytza priests—yearns for the Albanian tongue. And after his departure my acquaintances resumed in haste the story of their local woes, what time some of the passers-by gazed curiously at us and a couple of gendarmes in their smart uniforms seemed—only seemed, it may be—to be watching us.

“If you had been here the other day,” said one of my companions, “you would have seen a procession of women arriving at Argyrocastro, old women who could scarcely struggle up the long road from the plain, and young women with cradles

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on their backs. They were brought in from the surrounding villages because their sons, brothers or husbands had fled to Greece rather than serve in the Albanian army. Very often the women did not even live in the same house as the runaway men, but nevertheless they were held responsible."

"But surely," said I, "they were not thrown into prison?"

"A telegram was sent to Tirana, and after two days they were allowed to go home."

It appeared to be the general opinion of the company that these men should not have been compelled to serve outside the limits of Southern Albania, that is of the departments of Argyrocastro and Korytza, since this was against the spirit of the Statute regulating those departments, which in May 1914 was resolved upon by the International Commission and accepted by the Albanian Government. One might, however, object that the sovereign Albanian Government of to-day was no longer bound by this international arrangement, because the European Powers, which elsewhere, in countries they considered backward, had insisted on capitulations, did not seem, when they recognised a free and independent Albania in 1921, to have done anything calculated to damage the *amour propre* of the dominant Moslems or to protect the Orthodox population of Southern Albania. Legally, therefore, the Tirana Government may now be entitled to demand that the Orthodox should do their military service in any part of the country; but the numerous evasions show that

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these wretched men prefer to abandon their families rather than serve in an army of which practically all the officers are Muhammedans, an army which is so thoroughly of that religion that on their most sacred fast-days, when only certain food may be eaten, the wishes of the Christian soldiers—who have no chaplain of their own religion, but only a Turkish priest—are utterly ignored.

“I presume,” said I, “that you can’t air these matters in the Press?”

My friends could not help smiling, though rather sadly. “We can assure you,” they said, “that in the *Concordia* we had to be more prudent than to criticise that state of things. The *Concordia* was our newspaper, printed in Albanian and Greek; and the other day, without giving us any reason, the Government demanded that it should at once cease publication.”

“Yet we are told in Europe,” I objected, “that the Government consists of Moslems, Orthodox and Catholic; and that religious differences are of no more importance in Albania than are the differences of language in Switzerland.”

“It is quite true that there are Christians in the Cabinet and that we have a Christian prefect in this town and that some officials are Orthodox or Catholic. But look at our prefect, Tromara—who graduated for this post by selling bananas in the streets of America¹—he is more fanatic than the

¹ It is only fair to say that if M. Tromara consecrated his time in the United States to this occupation, it is one which can be recommended, for it enables its devotees to acquire a cultivated knowledge of the English language and the pleasant graces of a man of the world.

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Moslems. When our party settled not to vote at the elections he issued a proclamation that he would have the abstainers arrested, and he was as good as his word, for in Argyroscastro and in the villages he took that step. (By the way, he would have had his hands full at Korytza, as out of some 2000 voters in the town, only 120 Albanian Christians recorded their vote. Thus even Nationalist Christians abstained, as they thought, pretty shrewdly, that it was intended to have a purely Moslem State.) Only those Christians can work with the Moslem who subordinate themselves to them. And when we say that the Albanian Moslems—whether the ordinary Moslems, or those of the Bektashi sect—are fanatic, we mean that they tightly cling to their privileges, not so much to their religion.”

I remembered how some Muhammedan farmers near Santi Quaranta, in which place there is no hodja, but only an Orthodox priest—a keen-eyed old gentleman who has lived in that dreary spot for the last twenty-seven years—I remembered how these farmers had summoned him so that he should intercede on behalf of some sheep of theirs who were in the clutch of an epidemic ; the priest had prayed over them in the Greek language, not understood by the farmers, but they did not haggle about the fee.

“A great many other things we could tell you,” said the bearded man, “for example, about the two Christian schoolmasters at Premeti. In order to support their families, they changed themselves from Greek into Albanian teachers. They are not

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very qualified to give their lessons in this language which the Government enjoins, but the authorities are glad enough to get them, as almost the only Albanian teachers who can be found are practically illiterate men, the best of them recruited from those who were manual labourers in America."

"When I met your prefect at Santi Quaranta," said I, "he told me that the Government hopes to have no less than 250 young men constantly being educated in Western and Central Europe. They should form a nucleus for your schools and the civil service."

"Long before they can come back this Albania will have passed away."

"Mr Tromara hoped that some of them might even go to Oxford and Cambridge."

"But if you think that they would be apostles to our people you are wrong. These youngsters are chosen from the ruling families, whose supreme interest it is to hold the people in subjection. It doesn't so very much matter whether the young men are industrious or if they spend their time as they used to do in Vienna, where the Austrian Foreign Minister gave them the freedom of the town. When these young men come back do you suppose they will inaugurate an educational or any other crusade against the interests of their class?"

My interpreter was anxious for us to leave the town. He thought the purpose of our visit was being suspected. We had mentioned at our arrival that we wished to examine whether it would be

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possible to establish a cloth factory ; but on hearing that the local waterfall was less abundant in summer than in spring, we had sighed and spoken of other matters.

“Moreover,” said one of those present, “how would you build a house with a first floor and without a ground floor, with higher education for a small number of boys and for the rest an elementary education of the most primitive character ? ”

“Let us go. It is time,” said the interpreter. “Just now I saw one of those policemen taking notes.”

“You know best,” said I, “but I must ask them one more question. Can any of you gentlemen tell me about the American school at Korytza ? Mr Herbert, about whom we were talking, wrote of it to a friend of mine in December last when he was questioned as to the whereabouts of the minority schools, for whose establishment he had been asking the British public to applaud the Albanian Government.”

“But how could he say that the American school was set up by the Albanians ? ”

“Perhaps he only meant,” said I, “that it exists, and that it is a school for the minority who do not wish to have Albanian as the language of instruction.”

“But the school was closed some time ago.”

“Are you quite sure ? The President of the Anglo-Albanian Society——”

“If you go to Korytza you will see for yourself.”

“And shall I see a Greek school there ? ” I asked.

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“Does Mr Herbert say so?”

“You mean,” said I—for there was mockery in his voice—“you mean that he is once more in error? It is terrible. What will his fellow-members in the Society think of him?”

“They may not know more about Albania, but they will wish that he had written less. The Greek school at Korytza has been closed.¹ Where else does Mr Herbert say that there is a Greek school?”

“At Tepeleni. He says he thinks there is one in that place.”

¹ Mr Herbert afterwards wrote another letter to my friend, on January 29, 1922, in which he said that in Korytza “there used to be a Greek school, though there are hardly any Greeks there.” I would recommend Mr Herbert to lay down the presidency of the Anglo-Albanian Society and go to Korytza, where he would find that while there are very few Greeks in that town, there are very many persons who demand a Greek-language school. “I believe,” says he, “that it [the Greek school—but does he not know that there existed more than one?] has now been closed by the Orthodox Albanians of the town. This action has nothing to do with the Government.” Another vehement albanophil, Commandant Bourcart of the French army, tells us in his book (*L’Albanie et les Albanais*.” Paris, 1921) that while the Albanian Government has been very meritorious, the scholastic programme has been too vast for its young strength. How fortunate that the Moslems and the Orthodox Nationalist minority were good enough, on the Government’s behalf, to carry out that part of the programme which dealt with the Greek-language schools. The protection of these schools, which is a clause of the Pact of Kapishtica (May 1920), did not, according to Monsieur Justin Godart, lie with the Government, since the Pact was made between the Greeks and certain local Albanians; the Government are therefore—apart from the guarantees given to the Entente—not under any onus of explaining that they ever bound themselves to act in a civilised manner.

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"It has not existed for years. Tepeleni is a small town almost exclusively inhabited by Muhammedans. And, besides, it was practically destroyed by the great earthquake of November 26, 1920. The sub-prefecture is installed in a hut and the inhabitants—of whom scarcely three hundred remain—are living in the most flimsy and incongruous shelters."

"Come, let us go," pleaded the interpreter.

We intended to travel by way of the so-called triangle, spending the night at Jannina in Greece and returning thence to Albania. This deviation from Albanian territory was imposed upon us by the collapse of a bridge on the main road between Argyrocastro and Korytza. As we went along the narrow, sloping streets to where the car was waiting outside the ramshackle little hotel, that policeman accompanied us. He spoke very fair English and gave me the paper on which he had written his name and address. He had also added his qualifications, for he hoped that we would engage him in our cloth factory.

While we made the final preparations he stood with his hand on the hood of the car and waved his other hand towards the wide plain underneath us. "Very good country," quoth he, "very good natural. I hope that our country will soon be known in England. But we have some friends there. We have Miss Durham—she is a fine woman—she has written good about us. And there is Mr Herbert, who is a Congressman in the British Parliament. He knows all about our country."

VI

HIMARRA

ON the left wing of South Albania, over against Valona, there lies that most romantic and wild region called Himarra. From the book of Edward Lear¹ and from his pictures we receive the impression of a gloomy land of awful mountains, savage dogs and villages in which the chieftain entertains you in an old-world fashion—from ten to twenty persons every day sit round the tables of the rich—you might even be sprinkled with jasmine and rose-water. And while the fatted sheep is being roasted on the spit a man of mystery stalks out into the firelight from the shadows of the vast, bare room, and you perceive a fugitive from justice, who was famous twenty years ago in Western Europe. Inaccessible as was Himarra then in 1850, so is it now ; and if the reader settles down to learn just how my mule leaped safely down the precipices and upon the rocking stones climbed up the other side, he will be disappointed ; and yet by staying at Santi Quaranta, which is some thirty miles away, I avoided another sort of danger. It appears that once upon a time Miss Edith Durham visited Korytza, remained there for a night and sallied forth equipped with knowledge that her

¹ *Journals of a Landscape Painter in Albania, etc.* London, 1851.

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critics, such as Mr C. S. Butler,¹ have with every reason contradicted. I could have remained a night among the people of Himarra, for when the motor-boat arrived at last from Corfu the stout captain undertook to take me straightway to Himarra, landing there at 6 p.m., if I would come back early in the morning. Had the price not been exorbitant I should have gone, and very likely I should not have met in that short time such accurate informants as I did (I hope I did) in my brief stay at Argyrocastro. Thus all my knowledge of Himarra was secured away from it; but the natives who happened to pass through Santi Quaranta were of such a kind that I am not at all afraid of being contradicted. They even told me what variety of flowers I would have found, they told me that the dogs have not abated in ferocity, for they wage warfare with the wolves—a shepherd will give his life for a dog, since he cannot live without it. My informants were so much addicted to the truth that they did not conceal from me some questionable methods of their predecessors in the Turkish days: when the judge appointed by the Sultan was unjust the people killed him; and the system was imperfect, for, whereas the people often thought their judges were unjust, they slew them very seldom.

In those days the people's flag—blue and white, like that of Greece—flew from the citadel, and when the International Commission at Corfu determined, in May 1914, on the steps that should be taken to encourage the peaceful development of the provinces

¹ Cf. *Manchester Guardian*, Sept. 30, 1914.

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of Argyrocastro and Korytza, which the Greek troops were evacuating, they resolved that special measures should be taken for Himarra. The ancient privileges which this people had enjoyed under the Ottoman régime were to be continued, and for a period of ten years the governorship was to be in foreign hands; they suggested that the Dutch officer in command of the gendarmerie at Himarra might also exercise the duties of governor. "This arrangement," said the protocol, "is necessary in the general interest, for no one but a foreigner [in default of their own archigôs] could make himself acceptable to these people, whose habits and character are so independent that they cannot easily submit to the authority of the law." A few months after this the Dutch officers vanished, and since then the Himarriotes have had experience of some very unacceptable foreigners, the Italians. And on their departure in 1920 the district was taken over by the native Albanian Government.

The captain of Himarra expressed before the Commissioners at Corfu the hope that for his office the time-honoured title of archigôs should be retained—this has now become hereditary in the family of Spiromilos. It was understood that the district should embrace twelve Christian, one mixed and five Moslem villages. Those who preferred the ancient, entirely Christian, Himarra of eight villages were reminded that the Moslem elements would remove any tendencious atmosphere from the organisation and would also constitute a guarantee for the Albanian Government. Certainly

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it was the Christian villages which in the previous Greco-Turkish war drove out the Ottoman garrison and proclaimed their union with Greece even before the capture of Jannina and the arrival of any Greek forces ; but afterwards, under the Greek rule, the Moslem villages had joined the others and the whole district had governed itself. The relations between Christian and Moslem had been sufficiently cordial ; and down to this day in the village of Tshorai, where the population is mixed, the Christians during Lent prepare a special cake, half of which—for the Moslems—is made with butter, eggs and meat, while the other half—for themselves—has none of these ingredients.

Among the privileges which the Corfu Statute recognised was the permission for the Himarriotes to fly their own banner ; it was to be hoisted in conjunction with Albania's flag. The local gendarmerie was in no case to be employed outside the limits of the two provinces of Argyrocastro and Korytza. There was to be a law-court at Himarra, and the judges—to be chosen from the Orthodox ranks—were to have far-reaching powers, especially in penal matters, to the end that by a severe application of the law, made so to speak on the spot, one might overcome certain regrettable habits and also spare these men, so proud of their glorious past, a journey which to them would be much more irksome than to the ordinary prisoner. . . . All these regulations were adopted by the International Commission. Then the War broke out and the Italians descended on Himarra, and perhaps

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for military reasons they could not observe what they themselves had shared in laying down at Corfu.

It is obvious that what is very good in time of peace may not be possible in war time. The Italians had determined, with the other signatories of the Statute, that the language of instruction in the schools of Christian Himarra should be Greek, as it had always been, and even in the Turkish period. But, of course, for the Italians the chief consideration was the welfare of their troops and—although I am not in the confidence of their High Command—this would, it seems, in some way, have been jeopardised if all the little boys had learned their A B C in Greek. For that reason the prudent general expressed the wish that the little boys should take their lessons in Albanian, or, if this was not agreeable to them, he hoped that they would adopt his own tongue. For that purpose he imported male and female teachers from Italy. And furthermore he found that the presence of most of the leading men was very prejudicial; it could not be thought that they were secretly in favour of the Central Powers and so would use their chance to commit espionage, for practically to a man they were most ardent Venizelists; but the Italians are very careful people, and so the mayors had to be kept away from their offices and farmers from their farms and priests from their churches; not only had these people—swarms of them—to be stopped from practising their functions, but they had to be transported to the prisons at Valona or to various unhealthy islands, such as Favignana.

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The Italians are not only very careful people, they are also apt to be extremely fond of those who will be good enough to fight instead of them. They harboured the idea that by judicious handling they could put a fine Albanian army in the field against the Greeks or Yugoslavs. The first thing to be done, of course, was to furnish the Albanians with organisation; they must have a flag and schools and so forth. Think how grateful they will be! quoth the poor Italians to themselves. This might entail a little hardship on the Christian Albanians; but as they seemed to incline much more to Greece than to Albania, they would have to suffer for it. In October 1916 ninety of the chief men of Drymades, in Himarra, were transferred to a little desert island near Tripoli in Africa and kept there in strict seclusion. A number of other victims at this time were thrown into the dungeons of Argyrocastro, because they had declined to hoist the Albanian flag unaccompanied by their own banner. Simon Zoupas, the mayor of Himarra, was shipped to the island of Favignana; so was George Simos, captain of Himarra's little port Palermo. But this catalogue could be continued *ad nauseam*; suffice it to say that Himarra suffered the same fate as other parts of the two sandjaks, in which over two thousand Moslem Albanians enlisted as volunteers and in Italian uniforms were told off to commit atrocities, at any rate to terrorize the grecophils. Sometimes the Italians set them an example, as when the carabinieri desecrated the Holy of Holies in the Orthodox churches of Houmenitza and

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Palaeocastro ; sometimes the masters, still intent on organising the Albanians, sallied forth with their Moslem pupils—"Avoir fait de grandes choses ensemble," says Renan, "vouloir en faire encore ; voilà ce qui constitue la nation." And in Himarra, as in other places, the Moslem priests were imposed upon the Christians, in order to teach the children the Albanian language. Naturally the parents kept their children away from the Italo-Albanian schools ; and the Italians thought that they might have to use the same inducement as in 1906 at Scutari, where the editor of the *Italia* had charged the Catholic Albanian women with preferring dalliance to Mass. As a protest the Albanians withdrew their children from the schools. An earthquake supervened, money was raised for the sufferers, and a considerable amount of the money was employed in persuading the parents to send their children back to school.

When at last the Italians in 1920 evacuated Himarra the natives declared their independence—they were one of the duodecimo Cretes, anxious to be joined to their Motherland, and this declaration of independence was a step in that direction. Considering that practically all the leaders had been put out of the country, it is clear that some great spirit animates this people. The Greek school, which for five years had been closed, was once more opened ; but this gallant effort ended in September 1921, when the Albanian Government insisted on the execution of its own programme. In three villages (Himarra, Paliassa and Drymades) a lesson

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of an hour a day was authorised in Greek—the teachers were in the proportion of one Greek to three Albanians, and of these Albanians, who were all paid by the Government, two were Muhammedans. Their pupils were all Christians, and very willingly the parents would themselves have paid for Greek-speaking Christian teachers. All the other villages in Himarra were compelled to do without a single lesson in the Greek language; they were only permitted to retain their Greek-speaking clergy. But even the most harmless items of the people's religious life have been interfered with. On the Tuesday after Easter Sunday it was always their custom to visit one of the numerous monasteries. You went with your family and your priest, and outside the monastery you ate and drank—a sheep was roasted whole. Later on there would be a great firing of pistols; but all this has been stopped. Likewise it is no longer allowed to send off pistols at a wedding. As one of the natives told me, "It is an epoch now when every one stays a little calm."

Four hundred years ago a native of Himarra, one Elias, was received into the Muhammedan religion, and created Pasha of Jannina, in the hope that he would be able to persuade Himarra to submit to the Sultan. Not only did he fail, but no other Himarriote entered the Turkish service. The service which has always attracted them is that of fighting in the cause of freedom. About a century ago many of them crossed over to Italy, for the purpose of acquiring the arts of warfare; some of them under the Bourbons rose to be general

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officers, and yet in the Greek war of Independence every one of them, despite the urgent requests that they would stay, returned to fight for Greece at Missolonghi and other places. It is no figure of speech to say that the Himarriotes have lived for freedom. Rendering to the Turks no military service and only paying £(T.)118 a year in tribute, they were a little State within the State, governed by their archigôs and the Council of Eight Elders, the "demogerontiaë," who managed the public affairs and acted as peace-makers in cases of blood-vengeance. When towards the end the Turkish functionaries did arrive—a kaimakan, a hodja, a judge, two secretaries, some gendarmes and two telegraphists—they lived in a couple of houses which had been built for them below the village of Himarra, interfering not at all in local matters and spending a good deal of their time in writing for their superiors in Constantinople a series of memoranda on the lamentable love which the Himarriotes persistently retained for Greece.

Europe is not much concerned about this very little people. They who have so glorious a history have been thrust into an oubliette, for now their situation is much worse than what it was in Turkish times. They were left in those days to their own resources ; it was better far for them when they depended on the little Council of Eight Elders than it is at present when they are controlled by the European Council of Ambassadors, the League of Nations and the mighty, distant statesmen who have treated them so scurvily.

VII

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SINCE I believe that the Albanians are, in their present state of culture, unfit for self-government, I shall no doubt be suspected by those who are as yet unconvinced that I will unfairly select illustrations to support my thesis. It is not difficult to discover among the most enlightened races some peculiarities with which we others, on account perhaps of insufficient knowledge or humour, do not sympathise. In testifying to our disapproval of an alien people we should set about it very humbly—we should not, for instance, draw back in disgust from those jocund Africans who fatten up their captives and then lead them round the village, purveying their separate parts, extolling their plumpness, bargaining over the transaction with many a good-natured joke, and then scrawling on the legs and arms and so forth at what price these have been purchased. It is possible that in the minds of all those people, including the captives, there exists a sentiment of horror at the frigid, unsmiling way in which, without a trace of persiflage on her thin lips, a white girl has been known to sell herself to some wealthy ogre of a husband.

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Thus, in examining Albanian ideas of law and order, we must not forget that their mentality is different from ours. An acquaintance of mine, one Colleca, a Christian Albanian, the cousin of a Minister of the same name and himself an enthusiastic Nationalist, told me that he can scarcely associate with some second cousins of his, whose family about a hundred years ago went over to Islam and have gradually fallen into the mental rut of this religion. That is to say, we talk of it as a rut, while to the Moslem Albanian it is the one predestined, happy path. Allah in his great mercy has willed it that the faithful should prosper in this one part of Europe, and that they should triumphantly rule over their heretic relatives. The Prophet has lifted up his children.

Now there was a Christian judge at Leskovik, a cultivated, middle-aged man who had distinguished himself at Athens University. He then returned to his native Albania, and until about a week before I happened to meet him he had been a judge. But one evening in the café a Moslem officer of the gendarmerie, a primitive young man, was playing cards with him and not attending very carefully to the game. So the judge, after a time, asked him to refrain a little from the absorbing conversation he was carrying on with some friends, or else to postpone their game till a more propitious occasion. "Look here!" exclaimed the officer of gendarmerie, banging down his fist upon the table, "look you here! I am of those who can spill your blood and I do not wish you any longer to keep your post."

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On the next morning the judge wrote his letter of resignation, sent it to Tirana, and was, when I met him, strolling about Leskovik and making arrangements to withdraw, in a week or so, to his house at Erseka. He was well acquainted with his countrymen's temperament, and therefore did not treat the gendarme's threat as an English judge treats anonymous letters. This incident is not in accordance with our notions of law and order, but to the predominating party in Albania it is quite natural. Nor does it at all exhibit them in an unusual light. There was, by the way, a young Christian gendarme at Leskovik who was, at this time, under notice of dismissal; they had told him that he had been too officious in protecting his co-religionists.

And at Leskovik we had further evidence of the iniquitous policy with respect to the schools. Once there had been a Greek school; but during the Italian occupation it had been closed, the people refusing, as elsewhere, to have anything to do with an Albano-Italian school. They remembered the Statute of 1914, wherein Article 8 laid it down that in Orthodox communities—and most of the people at Leskovik are Orthodox—the language of instruction should be Greek, with Albanian being likewise taught in the three elementary classes. Italy was one of the powers which drew up this Statute, and is it surprising that the Albanian Government, which "wholly and unconditionally" accepted it, should when it came to their turn have treated their pledged word with Italian nonchalance? Although every inducement was held out to those

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of the population who would come to the Italian school—free education, financial assistance to the parents, a guarantee that the graduates would be given profitable positions in Italian firms—and the general advantage which the Italian language has over the Greek in the commercial circles of the Near East ; yet no success attended the Italian propaganda, or subsequently that of the Albanians. When I was at Leskovik only about thirty-five children—mostly Turks and gypsies—were visiting the school. The other children stayed at home.

“That reminds me,” said my informant, “of what happened here two months ago when some delegates—a Norwegian, a Finn and a Swiss—were here on behalf of the League of Nations. Before they arrived we were commanded to close all the shops or be sent to prison. Then we must come into the street and shout that we wanted an independent Albania. But only about ten or fifteen people and twenty boys acted in that way. The others stayed at home.”

“And how many of you were imprisoned ? ”

“They were afraid of doing it to anyone, because the mission stayed a week in Korytza and might have heard about it. When you go to Korytza you will hear other things concerning that mission which perhaps will astonish you. . . . But about the schools, all those in the villages round Leskovik have been shut. They used to have their schools, for which they paid themselves, with a little help from the Church. And now they have been shut—the priests talk to the children about the Bible

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and those things, but they are afraid of teaching anything else—they would be reported to the Government. Here in Leskovik some of the children are learning from their parents—very secretly, of course—but what can those parents do who are ignorant themselves ? ”

It was at Korytza that another Albanian conception of the law came under my notice. A certain Gjorge Ristić, a merchant of Pogradec, a grave, very comely man, married in 1910 a Monastir woman of Roumanian origin. The Roumanians, or Koutzo-Vlachs, have been largely hellenised, and this woman under the Turks had been a Greek schoolmistress. But she had a good deal to learn in the way of morals, for when she, her father-in-law and her young brother-in-law found themselves during the Great War in Bulgaria—the husband having fled with the Serbs (since their arrival at Pogradec in 1912 he had been a Serbian subject)—she did not conduct herself with propriety. However, the father-in-law determined that the husband should not be told, as she might resume her pre-war life on being restored to him, and since they had young children it was desirable that matters should be patched up. She had, however, continued in evil, and now it is more than three years since the husband instituted divorce proceedings. The Ecclesiastical Court at Korytza asked him to pay his wife 200 drachmas a month (which was then between £8 and £9), and as his daughter lived with the wife he consented. But after three years the court had come to no decision, for the Church in

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Korytza is now divided between the Albanian Nationalists, followers of the priest Fan Noli, and those who wish to preserve its Greek character. So the husband declared that he would wait no longer for his divorce and that he would stop paying the monthly allowance. The case was referred to the chief magistrate of Korytza, who begged Ristić, in view of the difficult circumstances in which the Ecclesiastical Court found itself, to give them a few months longer, and in the meantime to pay his wife a hundred drachmas every month. To this he agreed, and returned to Pogradec, which is a small town at the south-west end of Lake Ochrida. The head of the police at Pogradec immediately summoned him.

“What is this I hear?” he cried. “What is this about a hundred drachmas?”

“The judge at Korytza says——”

“What do I care for judges? You will go on paying the two hundred drachmas.”

“Why should I do that?” said Ristić.

The Pogradec police had already taken upon themselves to remove a large amount of his furniture and hand it over to the wife. They may have thought that it belonged to her, but now they again invaded his house and took away five of his suits. At this time Ristić was not aware that he was under the protection of a most efficient young gentleman, Stépanović by name, who had been placed in charge of the Yugoslav Consulate at Korytza. The police continued their persecution; they ordered him to pay the original monthly sum or else deliver

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the rest of his furniture; otherwise they would put him in prison. He refused; they had him in prison for a fortnight and afterwards went off with the furniture. They also said that he must send his eight-year-old son to the Albanian school or pay them 220 drachmas. He was then given ten minutes to make up his mind and he preferred to pay the money.

Fortunately then he went to see Mr Stépanović, who at once interviewed the judge.

"But neither the Chief of the Pogradec police nor the woman will agree to accept the hundred drachmas," said the judge, a little dark man. "I don't know what I can do."

"It was you who arranged that he should pay a hundred drachmas," said the Consul.

"Nevertheless the woman is accustomed to her two hundred," said the judge, "and living is expensive."

"And you would have the man go on paying this for ever?"

Then the judge attempted, being a rather ignorant man, to deny that Ristić was a Serb and had any right to be championed by the Consul.

But Stépanović pointed out that he intended to protect all those who had Yugoslav passports. The judge could cause them to be expelled but not to be maltreated.

They returned to the subject of the woman and the judge agreed that her reputation was not good. "But what can I do?" said he, very helplessly.

"Isn't a judge more than a policeman?" asked the Consul.

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“ Yes, yes—but—— ”

Finally, after more exhortation, the judge said he would see to it that Ristić should only pay the hundred drachmas.

It is commonly alleged that the woman and the Chief of Police, Ibrahim Bidniska, were at that time on very intimate terms. But the man has since then been promoted and is now Chief of the Police at Korytza. In appearance he is foxy. Once upon a time he was a Muhammedan priest, a hodja, and a rough kind of person withal. Whatever he may know concerning the law of the Koran, he is believed to be almost unacquainted with the law of the land. When the Albanian State was being organised he arrayed himself in a captain's uniform, announcing—when he was questioned—that the people had bestowed this rank upon him. He was obliged to take off one of his stripes, thus becoming a lieutenant. His deputy at Korytza, Thoma Ftitsa by name, used to be a simple waiter at the Hôtel Monastir in that town, which scarcely seems an appropriate training for the second-in-command of the police in a town of some 30,000 inhabitants. And Ibrahim's successor at Pogradec used to be at Korytza an ordinary labourer.

Contrast with this what the Greeks are doing. At Corfu in the old fortress they have instituted a police-school under three Britishers, two of whom are detective-inspectors from Scotland Yard. The curriculum in the school is precisely the same as that in a similar establishment in London, with the

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addition that a special emphasis is laid upon the desirability of each man acquiring a moral instead of a physical ascendancy over the people. Of course it is not every applicant who is accepted at this school, and those who are destined to become inspectors must have passed their examination in jurisprudence. All the large towns in Greece will be supplied from this school. It has already furnished Corfu with the new police ; and I was told that there is no comparison between the old force and the new. Not long ago there was some rioting, as a result of the olive legislation, and the police, unarmed as they now are, quietly became masters of an ugly situation. This moved a local newspaper, the *Suntagmatika* ("Constitutional"), to print a eulogy of them in English. It was headed "England for Ever !" and stated that in consequence of this achievement of the police, "With hot sympathy we salute . . ." and so forth.

Just opposite Corfu is Santi Quaranta, one of Albania's chief ports and the starting-point of the great highway across the country to Argyrocastro and Korytza. One afternoon the motor-boat which runs between Corfu and Santi Quaranta had arrived at this latter town, and while it stopped a few feet from the quay and a policeman went on board to scrutinise the passengers' passports, his colleague stood in front of a low gate in order to keep a number of idlers away from the harbour. One of these, a youth, began to argue with the lanky policeman, who, by the way, had lived for

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some years in America. Unable to make the youth keep silent this policeman struck him a severe blow, whereupon the boy hit back ; and the policeman, to vindicate his authority, could think of nothing better than to expectorate with deliberation and profusion all over the boy's face and coat. Of course the boy made use of the same weapon, and as the offended policeman strolled away, cleansing his khaki uniform, he may himself have had doubts as to the state of Albanian law and order. Corfu's police of the day before yesterday was not on this level.

It is said that the Tirana Government has succeeded in suppressing the brigands, and I certainly did not hear that any wayfarers had recently been molested. " In the time of Turkey, by God," said an informant of mine, " you was afraid to go anywhere, because thieves and robbers was in the streets." But nowadays the Government itself commits brigandage : at Santi Quaranta, for example, there were two Lancia road-rollers, constructed by the firm of Puricelli. They had been bought at the price of 100,000 francs from the Italians, and sold by the purchasers—who were local Albanian Christians—to the Greek Government. But the Tirana Government stepped in, announced that the two vehicles were its property and refused to allow their removal. They likewise refused to give the purchasers any compensation, although they had known very well that they intended to buy them and had refrained from telling the syndicate that the two machines were going

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to be considered as war booty. The Government appears to be hostile to its Christian subjects, save to the small subservient minority. At all events the Christians who believe that the Government's programme includes their ruin are not without grounds for that assertion. And almost the entire commerce of the country is in the Christians' hands.

One cannot help thinking that if those road-rollers had been bought by Muhammedans they would not have been seized in the same drastic fashion. The taxes are so regulated as to benefit the wealthy Muhammedan landowners, the Beys. The 45 centimes per oka (roughly 3 lbs.) which is imposed on flour coming from abroad will result in the starvation of a great many folk, but the Beys of Berat and that neighbourhood hope to sell their maize to the people at lucrative rates. The Moslems generally are favoured at the Christians' expense. Being landowners or officials they pay little ; they do not travel much, whereas the Christians, who go abroad on business, are heavily mulcted. A passport usually costs between 200 and 300 francs—only 10 francs for the actual passport, but then you are invited to pay the road tax, say 200 francs, and with a certain delicacy you are begged not to neglect the poor.

Santi Quaranta is a dull little place. This Italian name, by the way, is a translation from the Greek "Aghii Saranta," which refers to the forty martyrs who were killed apparently at Sebastopol many centuries ago ; the high-lying old church,

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now the abode of savage dogs, was dedicated to them. The Albanians call the town Sarande, and this in their language has no meaning. One sits in the large, white-washed dining-room of the wooden hotel, the Hôtel Mbretetor, which is decorated with coloured advertisements of foreign tyres and drinks and steam-ship companies, while on the central wooden pillar of the room are two small photographs of the late Mbret, William of Wied, and his wife. The former, with a heavy moustache and a very heavy face, would find it difficult to excite anyone's enthusiasm, but there is a lurking kindness in the hearts of the Albanians for the Princess who, since the days when they misunderstood her in 1914, has inherited an enormous fortune. High up on one of the walls are certain printed rules according to which the house is to be conducted. And of an evening, like a benignant schoolmaster, the comfortable Greek host surveys the scene from his little table on a platform, which occupies that quarter of the room which is furthest from the door. Now and then he comes down, takes a turn or two among his guests, bestows a vermouth on this one or that one, and then goes back to his perch. And although some of the frequenters are a trifle uncouth—you will see a piratic-looking Bey in his white and black national costume, dining with the white fez pushed back from his perspiring forehead and sprawling like a bear; you will see, perhaps, a group of Austrian engineers and local officials, with the light of the big suspended oil-lamp dancing on the very noble brow of one of the Albanians—and

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perhaps this notorious gentleman has been the slave of circumstance; and you will see a man sitting in the warm room, with a coat of sheep's wool thrown over his shoulder. He is a typical Albanian Moslem, with a silver chain round his neck, with black restless eyes and a small black moustache and a black fez and black nails. He is drinking wine. "The Koran," says an acquaintance of mine—one of the numerous Albanians who has been in America—"the Koran tells us to take it easy; and so, when we have pork and wine, we do not have too much of them." And while at the table of the Austrian engineers a discussion is going on which ranges from the merits of motor-cars to the derivation of Albanian words from Latin and sundry religious topics, I am being initiated by the American, as they call these returned emigrants, into some features of Santi Quaranta's history.

From its position at the end of the great road to Korytza it should be a flourishing place; but the Turkish Government discouraged the building of houses, because the inhabitants were (and are) mostly Christians; so that in recent Turkish times only two Christians built house there, and then under an agreement that in ten years the house became the Government's property. The Albanian authorities are to-day just as reluctant to have Christian householders; those houses which the Christians bought during the Greek or Italian occupation the Government now wishes to confiscate. "You know," said he, "the whole place was given to a wife of the Sultan, and now that we have our own

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Albanian Government they don't want to do anything against her rights."

"Why don't they buy her out?"

"I don't think," said he, "that they have made up their minds what to do. They have had 60,000 lire a year offered for that large house down by the harbour. It would do very well for offices and living-rooms; but they say that it belongs to her, and so they won't listen to any offer. Our Government is very good for any Turkish person."

"But I thought," said I, "that they are friendly with the rebel Turks of Kemal Pasha."

"That is true. He sends them officers for their army. We must have had 150 from Asia Minor—they come here on Italian boats and they are treated with great respect. Some of them can't speak Albanian. Yes, our Government is very fond of the Turks, those of Angora and of Constantinople, both of them. They want to make this country into a little Turkey. That they can understand; but they have no idea of making an independent Albania. They call it Albania, but in their hearts it is a little Turkey. They are laughing at the world which believes them when they shout that they are true Albanian patriots."

"Anyhow, in this part of the country," said I, "the ruling class doesn't seem to have many admirers."

"Europe should never have given us independence," he replied, "while we are in this present state. How many of our chieftains do you think have any idea of serving the Commonwealth?"

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And how many hundreds or thousands can any of these chieftains collect, in order to lead them against the Government? I could have told your people in the West beforehand that they had been misinformed if they supposed that the Albanians were fit for modern institutions. The Japanese thought it would be better not to give the Formosans a Parliament until they had been cured of head-hunting."

"There are some people who say that the Albanians will shake off their old ways very quickly."

"One can always hope, but they give little sign of it. And while our mediæval rulers have been given this country to experiment upon, a good many people in the country will have to suffer for it. You will have heard something about the Government's policy against the schools. Well, here at Santi Quaranta, with its large Orthodox majority, there is only one school, a Moslem school, that is allowed—I believe the master came from a Turkish school at Scutari. And those parents who can manage it send their children across to Corfu. There are even some Muhammedan children over there. As it happens the school in this place has been closed for a month because the master has been ill, and there are other schools I could tell you of which are doing precious little good by remaining open. The man they have appointed as school-master at Premeti used to hawk cigarettes in the street, and a colleague of his was a domestic servant. Of course, they have no diplomas whatever. At

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Lukovo in Himarra they have a man who used to be at Santi Quaranta, carrying bags of sugar and rice in the harbour. He just knows how to read and write."

It certainly would seem that, in lieu of adequate Albanian masters and until these could be procured, the former ones who had given their instruction in Greek should have been retained ; and the Government could have placed a gendarme in every school-room to prevent a whisper of anti-national propaganda in the lessons of mathematics and botany. The Greek master at Santi Quaranta, a very capable gentleman called Elie Semis, had been entirely muzzled and commanded not to give lessons even in his own house. A telegram of protest was sent in January 1922 to the Tirana Government, and when I was at Santi Quaranta after the middle of February no answer had been received.

While my companion was lamenting the enormous increase in taxation (for the mayor and most of the officials in the days of Wied had been public-spirited and unpaid men), I was struck by what the old Austrian engineer was saying.

"Very sensible of my daughter and her husband," quoth he. "They know by experience what it is to be in the Catholic Church, and so they are having their child brought up a Protestant. That is the best thing. They don't bother you."

"And then look how the taxes are fixed," said my neighbour. "First of all you pay for the permission to build, and afterwards, when the walls are two metres high, you pay again. Of course the

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oftener you have to pay the more chance there is of corrupt practices."

"Anyhow," said I, thinking of the old Austrian's words, "anyhow, as there are not many Muhammedans here, and they have no hodja, I am told, and no mosque, they certainly don't bother you others at Santi Quaranta."

"Every week," pursued the Austrian, "once every week for an hour I was compelled to learn religion and so were my children. But the Protestants leave you alone. They don't oppress you in that awful way."

"An hour a week isn't much," said one who was sitting at his table.

"We must move with the times," explained the thin, old engineer, as he jerked the ash from his cigarette. "The more that a people emancipates itself from the Church, the — well, the more emancipated it is. We Catholics in Austria were always giving money to the Church—yes, in these days of progress!"

The man beside me put his hand on my arm. "Are you listening?" said he. "There is indeed no mosque in Santi Quaranta, but the Muhammedans thought they would like to have one. Of course, we Orthodox had built our own Church, but they were going to do nothing of that kind, although in the neighbourhood, at Delvino and Argyrocastro, there are plenty of rich Muhammedans. Two months ago they asked our municipality to put them up a mosque."

"Which is unjust, you suggest?"

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“Justice ! What idea have they of that ? They have so few people—as they hate to put in a grecophil—they have so few that are able to administer even their kind of justice that they are obliged to take foreigners. There is a judge at Korytza, a Serbian subject, who doesn’t know two hundred words of Albanian. It is as bad as in the old days when that office used to pass from father to son.¹ And in Korytza you will see a Moslem high priest who, after he became a priest, killed more than ten Christians for the sake of their money ; and now, as he is afraid of vengeance, he always carries a revolver.”

It is a delightful thing in this grey world to be an optimist ; it is even more delightful, I think, to be a real humourist, and you shall hear the words of

¹ In France they called this unhappy system the Paulette, after its inventor, Paulet, who brought it to the notice of Henry IV. That monarch had the reputation, among a good many of his subjects, of being the wisest, most experienced and most prudent man in the kingdom ; while his Council, we are told, consisted of personages so illustrious that it was scarcely possible for them to make a mistake. It was assumed that even as a nobleman inherited the warlike virtues from his father, so did the son of an official or a magistrate have in himself the administrative or judicial aptitudes ; and thus the King and his Council gave their sanction to the hereditary transmission of these offices, with the understanding that about $\frac{1}{10}$ of their annual value should be paid to the State. Not only did a man succeed in this way to a post, but there was nothing against him having it willed to him or sold to him by his predecessor. Monsieur Hanotaux tells us, in *La France en 1614* (Paris, 1913) that public opinion did not cease to protest against these abuses, but that they were not abolished till the Revolution.

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Monsieur D'Estournelles de Constant, Senator of France. "The Albanians," says he, "will introduce into their country an honest and ameliorating administration, without doing any damage to her traditional virtues ; she will attract the travellers, the tourists, the artists of the whole world ; the friends of liberty will come to her as pilgrims ; unhappy land of injustice and of suffering throughout the ages, she will become the promised land of optimism, just like France ; the exemplary land which ill fortune shall never have conquered and which shall never have allowed herself to sink into despair. With her different religions, all of them tolerant, with her neighbours who so long were troublesome now made pacific, she will be the model country of conciliation and of life lived in community, in harmony ; she will be both idealist and practical, a prosperous country which was threatened for so long and which at last is happy ; in fact, the Switzerland of the Balkans."

VIII

SS. VEAUTE AND GODART

Who is there amongst us that has revelled in the ever-joyous volumes of the Bollandists and who, amid his smiling memories of all those venerated men and women, does not sometimes feel a pang of keen regret that he lives in a period so far removed from them? No doubt, we say, that through these fragrant chronicles we may be edified; but, even as we read, the melancholy thought recurs that this most marvellous procession passed across the lands of Europe many years, nay centuries, ago. And we are grievously oppressed to find ourselves in such a dull, indifferent age.

In such an age—but, no! Is it not we ourselves who are indifferent to beauty, dull in the perception of true holiness? Reflect, oh thou who hasteneth athwart the world; surely thou hast encountered someone, somewhere, on whose head a halo very fittingly might dwell and who, perchance, will some day be received into the hierarchy of saints. Or at the least thou hast been told of one of these bright beings by a friend who, favoured more than thou, beheld him face to face.

I also have come into contact with good people who themselves, in far Albania, were privileged to

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touch the raiment of two Frenchmen, Veaute and Godart by name, whose lovely lives will be narrated, let us hope, in four or five centuries by the industrious Bollandists. For these two Frenchmen, one of them known in France, and one of them known rather scoffingly, have done more meritorious deeds than some who in the Balkans have achieved their sanctity. Near to Rilo, in the mountains of Bulgaria, is the cavern of St Ivan, an old shepherd of whom history relates that one day, meeting there a Turk, he slew him ; and, as nothing else has been preserved of Ivan's life, we may presume that he was honoured by the Church because he championed her on one occasion very thoroughly. I do not hesitate to say that Veaute and Godart have to their credit various transactions which seem more deserving than that one recorded deed of rough, old, honest Ivan. He killed his unbeliever, and I do not know that either Veaute or Godart have killed anyone, though Veaute was a soldier and Godart a physician. There will be other reasons stated by their Albanian advocates upon that distant day when solemnly their merits are debated.

It has been said that God delighteth most in those among His saints who rise from utter foulness. The degree of foulness where at first, the Great War being ended, we find our Veaute is such that his compatriots spoke of him as "un type terrible." A Zouave before the War, he had become a non-commissioned officer, and these activities deprived him of the leisure during which he doubtless would have studied, for his education was unfor-

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unately far from perfect. Yet he had certain inborn qualities which—though some of his compatriots speak of them as immoral—served to procure for him the post of Chief of the Secret Police at Korytza, when the French army occupied that town. And when the French army departed, the good Veaute considered that it would be well to remain among the Albanians as a secret agent, and this post was conferred upon him. Perhaps he had never heard of the notorious Italian Lieutenant Cola who, during the occupation by his country of Southern Albania, found employment in the police. When Cola died suddenly of influenza, before he could dispose of his property, it was found that in Albania he had acquired about 200,000 francs in gold, together with a large collection of old armour and of valuable silver ware.

Subsequently, in May 1921, there appeared in those parts Monsieur Justin Godart who came, it was believed, to learn the truth about Albania. And the day before his arrival at Korytza, so that the population might be duly impressed, the Prefect gave an order that the shops be shut. Outside the town this gentleman was met by a battalion of the army, with their music; and escorted in this fashion Justin Godart, seeking for the truth, rode into Korytza. The shops were shut, the schools were shut, so that the people could have time to demonstrate; and numbers of them did so during the four days that Godart stayed there. Every day the civil or the military music played before the house where he was lodged; and had he gone from

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house to house to find the truth about this place the music would have probably gone with him and played very loudly. But he did not go ; he let the people bring him ornamental knives and silver cups and splendid carpets. And he bore false witness to the world. Knowing very well—for he is a man of intelligence—that this music and the truth could not simultaneously enter his ear, he was content to listen to the siren song of the Governmental party. Perhaps he did not know that Christians who might wish to approach him could only do so after receiving permission from the Prefect. Perhaps he did not know that some who harboured the idea found in the morning little wooden coffins on the handle of their doors. Perhaps he did not know that the Albanian Liberals, almost the only true patriots, wanted to protest against Veaute's nomination, and that they were forbidden by the authorities to do so. There was something about Veaute which appealed to Godart, and it is alleged that he influenced Tirana to appoint this fellow-countryman of his to reorganise the police. Not for him the warning of Talleyrand who, in a letter to Comeyras on the subject of Ali Pasha, said that "il ne faut pas se fier trop légèrement à ces sortes de gens." At all events, Veaute is now Albania's Inspector of Police, a most important official. . . . And Godart on his balcony became so frenzied in his love for the Albanian authorities that he refused to pay the slightest public tribute to the suffering Christians. Five speeches did he make one evening, with his face

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more and more crimson. He was completely beyond himself. As he embraced the black and red flag he cried that in its waving folds he saw the future of a great Albania. "Oh, qu'il est beau ! qui'il est noble, le drapeau albanais !" This he exclaimed at least ten times.

In the history of our two saints we have now arrived at the nadir, the lowly point to which the twain have sunk ; and, following the lines of many hagiologies, we should describe how painfully they started on the upward path. We are compelled to leave Saint Godart at this horrid stage of his career ; but surely in some centuries, when the Albanians succeed in having him enrolled among the saints, there will be a catalogue of beneficial works ascribed to him. They will, perhaps, begin by pointing out that this former Under-Secretary of Hygiene did not come to worry the noble Albanians by talking shop and telling them that the one W.C. with which their country has been credited is insufficient. No, he earnestly consecrated himself to politics, bringing all his marvellous penetration to bear on subjects, which for less gifted persons are full of doubt. The ordinary traveller may return uncertain answers if you ask him what the future holds for the Albanian people. It is different with Justin Godart, for on landing at Valona all he had to do was to gaze into the dark eyes of an Albanian girl and then proclaim that in them he beheld a future great Albania. If he never in his life pays any more attention to that country, then will the very exploits we have chronicled be set forth

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in a suitable, discriminating fashion by the grateful Shqyptart of the centuries to come.

Saint Veaute, on the other hand, has made a certain progress to the heights celestial. No less august a body than the League of Nations has in the most public fashion hung a garland round his neck. The delegates, who visited Albania and the border region in 1921-1922, have told us that they were "accompanied by Captain Veaute, a former French officer extremely well acquainted with the country, whom the Commission has considered useful to attach to itself as an observer." And who can doubt but that in this position he was very useful to the Government of his adopted country? He observed. And when the delegates—a Swiss and a Norwegian and a Finn—set up their court in villages which now had been returned to the Albanian State, those men and women whom they had before them surely noticed that they were observed by the Inspector of Police. "In all these villages," we are told, "the enquiry took place publicly in the presence of the Prefect of the district, of the Albanian military commandant, of the Serbian interpreter and of all the inhabitants, who thus had the opportunity to lay their complaints before the Commission and the competent authorities." People who can write like that are scarcely those whom I would send as delegates into the Balkans. And now, leaving Veaute to be lauded in 500 years by the Albanians, we will pay a little more attention to those delegates.

IX

CONCERNING THE DELEGATES OF THE LEAGUE OF NATIONS

OF course it may have been the merest oversight that in their memorandum, speaking of Veaute, there was no reference to his actual occupation. A reader of the memorandum might suppose that Veaute happened to be sojourning among the Shqyptart for his health. Verily, the last thought anyone would have would be to think that he was Chief of the Police. An International Commission of Enquiry going with the chief of the police of one of the two interested parties ! But the delegates themselves knew all about it, and when their, we may say unconventional appointment was discussed between them and the Yugoslav Consul at Korytza — “ Mon Dieu ! ” they said, “ but he’s a Frenchman.”

“ Let me tell you,” said the Consul, “ that the grecophil clergy and notables are being watched by the police and prevented from having access to you.”

“ Oh, come now ! ” said the delegates.

“ As a friend of both parties I would advise you to visit the people in their own houses.”

“ You really think it is necessary ? We have so little time.”

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And in that week they stayed at Korytza one grecophil only (a Dr Notska) was approached by them, which was a pity, seeing that the population is equally divided between Christian and Moslem, while 80 per cent. of the former are strenuous grecophils. Of course one means by this that they cling to their Greek culture, not that they yearn to become Greek subjects. Any movement that there has been or will be of this kind is simply due to the despotism of the Moslem majority, who drive the most intelligent of their people into craving for incorporation in a foreign State. Gladstone used to say, according to Sir Thomas Raleigh of Oxford, that Liberalism was not his own political creed, but a refuge to which he had been driven because the Tory party had failed him.

As the delegates—Mr J. J. Sederholm, a Finnish geologist, Major J. C. Meinich, a Norwegian, and Comte H. de Pourtalès, a Swiss—had no time to make a sound investigation, they will possibly be pleased if I assist them. It would be foolish to pretend that four days, which was all I spent at Korytza, sufficed to give me a very intimate knowledge of the local circumstances. "His account of Korytza is very evidently founded on hearsay only," says Miss Edith Durham,¹ who is alleged to have spent one night in that town some years ago, "and not on any personal experience." But I did manage, I think I can say, to learn more than those three delegates; of whom I understand the Comte de Pourtalès did display some anxiety

¹ Cf. *Manchester Guardian*, June 5, 1922.

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to hear both sides. "Albania," says our friend Godart¹—"Albania is awaiting their report with confidence. It will put a final stop to the story of the conflicts waged by one of the most ancient nations in the world, a story whose conclusion will be the splendid victory of justice."

At first it seemed as if I also would be restricted to securing my information from the grecophobe party, because the others did not dare to speak. They knew that, though the arch-observer had departed, his subordinates were taking careful note of all the movements of the grecophils. This made it necessary for them to make use of devious, not to say theatrical methods. I am glad to think that they succeeded in giving a good deal of indispensable information.

During the month of March 1921 the big Church of St George at Korytza was seized by the Albanian Nationalists, who, as we have seen, form only one-fifth of the orthodox community, but have behind them the assistance of the Moslem and therefore of the gendarmerie. The church was forcibly appropriated in spite of the contract of Kapishtica (a village on the Albanian-Greek frontier), by which the Albanians undertook to leave the autonomy of church and schools to the grecophils of Korytza and the neighbourhood until the Albanian State had been completely formed, and after that the people were to be consulted. The Metropolitan Church was left to those who desired that Mass should be sung, as

¹ Cf. *L'Albanie en 1921*. Paris, 1922.

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of old, in the Greek language. At Easter 1921 an attempt was made by certain priests and some young people to celebrate an Albanian Mass in the cathedral; this was prevented by the Government, which, as M. Justin Godart approvingly tells us, was anxious above all things to keep the peace. He strangely omits to add that on December 20 this church was captured by the Nationalists, headed by Fan Noli himself, and that service was held in Albanian. (The reverend and energetic gentleman had represented his country at Geneva three months before this, when it solemnly signed a Minorities Declaration whose object was to protect the Greek-language churches and schools.) A frantic effort was made by some of the more daring to throw out the trespassers, and very lamentable scenes took place. The priests were hustled and Fan Noli's beard was pulled—some say that it came off; that is, the artificial beard he is alleged to wear to supplement his meagre one and make him more imposing. But whatever be the truth of this, Fan Noli's party had the civil and the military power behind them, and they triumphed. (Apparently this interesting ecclesiastic did not think he need display that elevated spirit of moderation and justice which he exhibited at Geneva, and which, according to Lord Robert Cecil, was so deeply appreciated by the League of Nations.) Anyone who wished to hear the Mass in Greek had now to go out to a village, and it was a common sight to see the pious little groups of people, chiefly women, tramping out—but, says the ineffable Godart, the people

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were almost unanimously Albanian both by race and by inclination—tramping out to Borie and Drenovo and other villages. Those country priests are very simple folk. “Where did you go to school?” a friend of mine asked one of them, an old man.

“Ah, my dear son,” the priest replied, “in my day there were no schools, especially not for the poor. So I let my hair grow, and the people cried, ‘Look, there goes a pope!’ I learned to read a little and my memory was good—all that I have to say in church I learned by heart.”

“If the Government told you to use Albanian instead of Greek?”

“I know,” said he, “about 200 words of old Greek and new Greek and Albanian and Slav—my village is Slav, like some others near Korytza.”

For a time he was allowed to use Greek; and on January 7, St John’s Day, there was a pilgrimage of about 3000 people to his village and another. On the way they were met by gendarmes and a pitched battle took place; afterwards a thousand persons came into the courtyard of the Serbian Consulate and the wide street opposite. They besought the Consul to protect them; his advice was that, until the League of Nations had decided what was to be done in Church affairs, they should remain at home and pray to God from there.

A few elderly women were charged by the police with having made a riot, and the police thrashed them. So they brought their case before the judge, for which they secured the assistance of Albanian lawyers.

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When the case came into court the judge did his utmost to make it appear that these old pious women—who had only wished to satisfy their religious sentiments—were against the State. In his eyes it was simply a political move. And in the midst of the proceedings he burst out: "What were you doing at the Serbian Consulate? Did you sleep with the Consul?" This gentleman is regarded by the Albanian Government as one of their best judges. He used to be a Turkish judge at Ochrida before the Balkan War, and now—having learned rather less than 200 words of Albanian—he adorns the bench of that country.

A few months previously—in September 1921—the authorities had determined to ignore the other part of the contract of Kapishtica and close the Greek schools. They invited the children to come to the Albanian school, but the young people preferred—and so did their parents—the alternative of promenading the town. This was not due to any misplaced anti-national feeling or the uncompromising refusal to change from their ancient system, but rather it was owing to the extreme inadequacy of the Albanian school, the teachers in which were mostly workmen who had come back from America. "Let all those who wish to do so frequent the Albanian school," said a professional man to me. "Since September my child has been in the streets. It is better for us that the Government should kill us rather than shut the schools."

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"But is there no school at all," I asked, "except the elementary Albanian one?"

"There is a French *lycée*, where the boys learn that language, perhaps for a year, and nothing else. You will agree with me that the language of instruction should be either the maternal tongue or that which is chiefly used in the country; it should not be a foreign language. Here in Albania French is scarcely known, and the establishing of a French *lycée* is unpractical, unfruitful and against the rules of pedagogy. If the maternal tongue is in too rudimentary a state—as is the Albanian—then one should employ the language which is there the most popular and the best understood. That is why the Greek schools, primary and secondary, are institutions on which our prosperity, our peace and our existence absolutely depend. And the Government have nothing to pay for the Greek schools, as these are supported by our people themselves."

At lunch in a rather noisome little restaurant—the best of which Korytza could boast—the young prefect, two Italian engineers, a French school-master and I used to take our meals together. One day I found the bearded Frenchman by himself. "I have a good appetite," said he. "I have worked for three hours this morning."

"What were you doing," I asked—"mathematics or history or——?"

"No, I was reading them a novel by Anatole France. In that way they will learn the language."

And while this is taking place inside the *lycée*, the Greek-speaking masters, who would give the boys

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a decent education, are compelled to spend their days in idleness. One of them—his name is Thomou—was on two occasions visited by the police. He was giving lessons to his young brother, whereas the police fancied that he had another pupil, and this is strictly forbidden. "As for the fact that Albanian is the language of the schools at Korytza, this," says Miss Durham,¹ "is only natural. The Christians as well as the Moslems are Nationalists." Who told the poor lady that? "Last summer," says she, "I met many of the Christians of that district, and heard how they were striving not only to eliminate Greek education but also to establish a Nationalist Church." Well, since they have the Moslem army and police behind them, it is in the power of this minority not to eliminate alone the legal privileges but the lives of the other 80 per cent. One can understand why no representative of those 80 per cent. thought it worth while to come to London and see Miss Durham. "The Christians as well as the Moslems," says she, "are Nationalists"; and I believe she would continue to say so even if she went to Korytza and found large numbers of Christians undergoing various degrees of martyrdom on account of their anti-Nationalist views.

"We should also like to know," said the delegates to the Serbian Consul at Korytza—"we should like to know whether your people have evacuated the monastery of St Naoum."

¹ Cf. *Manchester Guardian*, May 29, 1922.

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"I fear," said the Consul, "that if you think the Albanians have any claim to St Naoum, you have not been well informed. Why don't you go there and see for yourselves?"

The Swiss delegate was in favour of this, but his two colleagues repeated that they were so pressed for time. As a matter of fact they did, when they were on the shores of Lake Ochrida, come to within a mile or so of the monastery. There they are alleged to have said to the frontier guards that St Naoum would very likely be given to Albania, and then they turned back. . . . By the way, the Yugoslav Government has been using as frontier guards, mingled with her own troops, all round the country, a number of Russians who belonged to General Wrangel's former army and who have sought shelter in Yugoslavia. These troops participated in last year's operations on the Albanian front and thereby earned the disapproval of the editor of the *Near East*. One does not remember to have seen denunciations of the French Government for enrolling in her Foreign Legion the natives of all kinds of countries. But the editor of the *Near East* must be absolutely horrified, since he is such a severe opponent of the much more limited Yugoslav arrangement, which only accepts these brother-Slavs. Unlike those who enter the service of France, these foreigners habitually become both officers and non-commissioned officers; yet even such as have a lower rank than one would think their due are mightily contented, for the Serbs are kind to them. I met, for instance, at St Naoum a

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certain Baron Korff, a most cultivated man from the Baltic provinces, who was at the aristocratic Pages' Corps in Petrograd a year or two earlier than the present King of Yugoslavia. When Korff, who is a sergeant, was strolling about with a Serbian officer and myself, or when he and I were alone—it made no difference—he was obviously grateful to the country which had helped him and his comrades in their plight. He was full of faith that in a few months they would tread again on Russian soil, but meantime the 500 dinars (equivalent then to 80s.) which he received a month was quite sufficient. Naturally such a man is an exception, and, for all that I know, there may be some officers in the Legion Etrangère who are willing to engage, as did Major Gjuro Jakopović on this occasion, in artistic, sporting and political discussion with a foreign legionary of the better sort ; but from all that we have heard or read, the common soldiers in the Legion are treated—perhaps of necessity are treated—in a way quite different from that which is the rule between the Serbian officers and the Russian rank and file.

We left these League of Nations' delegates uttering vain words at a short distance from St Naoum. A visit of an hour or so would really have been worth while from the æsthetic point of view ; but there is not much in Switzerland, and certainly nothing in Norway or Finland, which can imbue the natives of those countries with a love for grand old buildings. Even in its present partly ruined condition—for St Naoum during the Great War

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was occupied by the Bulgars, with the French on the neighbouring hills—even so it presents a magnificent and lovely picture. Walking across the vast courtyard one enters the white monastery by a portal over which is sculptured one of the saint's miracles, when he obliged a bear which had consumed a certain farmer's ox to let himself be harnessed by the side of the remaining ox and plough the farmer's field. The bear seems to be gently laughing at his curious destiny; and happy laughter is the note of the delicious inner courtyard, with the grey doves fluttering round the fig-tree and the vines, the rambling staircases, the quaint inscriptions built into the walls, and the red and white cupolas of the church, a little ancient gem.

A thousand pities that the delegates did not come to the sacred house and ascertain the outlines of its history. They would have seen the saint's undoubted tomb, which has been held in deepest reverence for something like ten centuries; in fact the Moslems down to this day (whose ancestors in Naoum's time were Christians) come and sit beside his grave and pray in their own fashion. It also frequently occurs that those who cannot come send offerings; they show this Christian saint a good deal more respect than does the League of Nations. . . . A mediæval picture which records some of the saint's miracles has been preserved; whereas two devastating fires, and especially the recent war, have made a clean sweep of the ancient documents. Tradition has it that the picture was executed just

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after Naoum's death ; the wording underneath each miracle is Greek ; for while the old Slav tongue was used in church, Greek was the language for the sphere of art. That Naoum himself was a Slav we know from other sources ; likewise that St Clement, the Archbishop of Ochrida, who buried him was a Slav—both of them were natives of Moravia. When SS. Cyril and Method travelled in that region they received Naoum as one of their disciples, caused him to come to the district of Ochrida, and eventually, in common with other people, recognised him as a saint during his lifetime. He was, at his particular request, buried in the monastery church, and his name was thereupon conferred upon it. Throughout the Middle Ages, so far as anything is known, it was always in the diocese of Ochrida and it contained a seminary for priests ; while Ochrida was sometimes under Slav and sometimes under Greek bishops, it was certainly never under an Albanian.

In fact, the Albanians have never had the slightest connection with this famous monastery. Little is known of the time before Naoum, but the special honour which has always been and is still paid to the Archangel Michael is probably because that Archangel was held in particular reverence by the Adriatic dynasty. He who built the first church on this spot was Vladimir (d. 1015), who was a Dalmatian, a Prince of Dioclitia,¹ a member of the Adriatic dynasty and afterwards a saint of the

¹ Cf. *South Slav Monuments : Serbian Orthodox Church*. London, 1918.

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Serbian Church. It happened that Vladimir was brought as a prisoner to Ochrida, which then was in the hands of the Bulgarian Tsar Samuel. In the year 980, while he lay there in prison, the daughter of Samuel fell in love with him, and he was set free in order to marry her. He subsequently tried not to be implicated in the quarrels of his two brothers-in-law, Radomir and Vladislav, of whom the latter was assisted by the Greeks. They seem to have advised Vladislav to kill his half-brother and rule in his stead, but he replied that he was afraid of Vladimir. He called him to a council, but Vladimir sent his wife Kossara ; her brother announced that he could not make the necessary arrangements with a woman, and as a sign of loyalty he sent a bishop with a cross. Thereupon Vladimir made up his mind to come ; he was imprisoned and ultimately killed. In all these transactions between Serbs, Bulgars and Greeks, the people who dwelt at Ochrida, the monastery and the surrounding regions, there is not the least mention of an Albanian. The sole connection I can find with these people is the fact that the capital of the Adriatic dynasty was Scutari, which now is Albanian. As well might the people of Cyprus, remembering that Richard Cœur de Lion ruled over their island, ask the League of Nations to grant them a few old English monasteries.

The most venerable inscription in the church at St Naoum dates from 1711. Some of the frescoes are modern and rather crude, but many are old, the products of a time when the Albanians were without any culture ; and a tablet built into the wall of

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the inner courtyard gives the names of the abbots from 1809. There is not an Albanian amongst them. In fact, it seems inexplicable why the Albanians, or the League of Nations on their behalf, should put in a claim to a monastery which, it is very obvious, belongs by every right to other people. Do the Albanians long to remedy their grievous lack of works of art, or have they heard that in the neighbourhood of St Naoum there is a coal-mine ?

We have spent perhaps too much time in considering these very unsatisfactory delegates of the League of Nations, and it will suffice if we note the bare facts with regard to the village of Lin ; it will suffice, let us hope, for this village eventually to be restored to Yugoslavia. A small place of about a hundred houses, it was within the Yugoslav frontiers of 1918 and 1918. It has importance, seeing that it is the centre of the fishing industry on Lake Ochrida ; and for some reason best known to the Ambassadors' Conference and the League of Nations, it was transferred in 1921 to the Albanians. There is a very wretched track that joins it to Elbasan, and one could scarcely say that the interior requires this outlet to the lake. If the people, who are partly Moslem, partly Christian, were consulted, they would give an overwhelming vote for their inclusion in Yugoslavia ; three of the reasons being that their fish is much more profitably sold there, they are themselves a peaceful folk, while in the third place they have now experienced both the Yugoslav and the Albanian rule.

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There was among the people in the village one who fell a great deal short of the prevailing respectability, and he chanced to be a Serbian subject—his passport dated from their occupation—though by race he was Albanian. He committed various crimes, and more than once he came with friends of his across the frontier into Serbia to continue there his evil practices. He was pursued by the frontier police, and one day when they managed to get close to him they ordered him to stop, but he declined; they eventually fired at him and killed him. This occurred on Serbian territory, yet the Prefect of Korytza protested that the man was an Albanian. So the Serbian Consul begged the Prefect to go north with him and make a full examination of the case. The Prefect could not go, because his motor-car was damaged. But our friends, the League of Nations' delegates, heard of this incident; they were at Pogradec, and instantly they summoned four of the notables of Lin, two Moslems and two Christians, saying that they wished to see them at Korytza with respect to the frontier and also—though this appears to have been the main reason—with regard to the criminal's death. These four men were conveyed to Korytza by the Albanian police, who paid for them at the hotel and kept them from communicating with anyone in the town. They were questioned by the delegates concerning the above-mentioned affair. It really seemed as if these delegates were thirsting to discover a good case against the Serbian frontier police and Serbia generally. So, without a word

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to the Consul, they took upon themselves to examine his co-nationals ; but this utter disregard of international law and international courtesy does not seem to have provided the poor delegates with any adequate results. At any rate, I have not seen a memorandum issued by them on the horrible iniquity of Serbs, who massacre good fellows all along their frontier. But now the frontier of Albania, so the delegates informed these villagers, would strike the lake a little to the north of Lin. And when the Serbian Consul saw the delegates and started speaking about Lin, " Oh, we don't know," they said. " We have been told by the police about a man of that place, but we know nothing much about it." Instead of passports, these four men had come with letters given to them by the delegates—whether or not they were empowered to do so—and bearing the address : " To the Yugoslav authorities in the neighbourhood of the village of Lin."

One day a rumour was started—never mind by whom—in Korytza to the effect that the wicked Serbs had wantonly invaded Albanian territory to the north of Lin. The rumour quickly spread, and that evening the delegates came to the Serbian Consulate in order to say good-bye.

" But isn't this rather unexpected ? " asked the Consul.

" We have had news—something has happened somewhere," they said mysteriously, " and we must leave at once."

When, after an arduous trip along the lake from Pogradec to Lin, they learned that they were

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pursuing a mare's nest, they sadly turned westward in the direction of Elbasan. They had always, when invited to talk to non-governmental folk, excused themselves by saying that they were so pressed for time. And now they had to waste a good deal of time in travelling along the miserable track. Let us leave them there.

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Between the village of Lin and the monastery of St Naoum there lies, at the south-west corner of the Ochrida Lake, the pleasant, picturesque, rather vague little town of Pogradec. Since the Serbian occupation after the Balkan War the people have been very favourably inclined towards that country, whose officials and administration—the most Serbophobe person will admit—are not on the Turkish or Albanian level. When the French were at Pogradec during the European War one Mortien, Commandant of Gendarmerie, asked every citizen to say in writing whether he desired a French, Albanian or Serbian school. A majority asked for a Serbian school, though most of the people are of Albanian origin. This did not appear to suit Commandant Mortien. He went to Korytza and obtained there some Greek schoolmasters and mistresses; these were brought to Pogradec and, being well paid, consented to give instruction in that language, with which they were far from conversant. The Serbophiles at Pogradec petitioned the High Command of the French army, but received no reply. And when the French departed,

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leaving Pogradec to the Albanians, all those who had voted for a Serbian school—so far as one could trace them—were punished. Under the present Albanian dispensation there are ten teachers for about 250 children. This might make one think that the Government is impelled by the most praiseworthy motives, seeing that in Turkish times there used to be only four teachers. But when one considers the quality of the actual staff—the inspector having only gone through five classes of the elementary school and several of the others having previously been waiters in cafés or shepherds and only just capable of signing their names—one is forced to conclude that their presence is due less to the Government's wish than to their predilection for the salary, which varies between four and eight gold napoleons a month. The authorities even for a time returned the kindness which they had received from the French, for a Frenchwoman, the wife of a man who runs two motor-boats on Lake Ochrida, was engaged at a good salary in the elementary school, though the children could not understand much of what she said.

The majority of the people of Pogradec who asked for a Serbian school, and who, if there were a plebiscite, would vote for inclusion in Yugoslavia, are not chiefly moved by the fact that they belong—about three-fourths of them—to the Orthodox Church, for many who have these desires are Moslem. They feel as do the natives of Lin, preferring a relatively settled country to one distracted not alone by the conflicts and incompetence of the

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Albanians, but also by the propaganda of Bulgarian komitadjis and Italian agents.

[It would be unfair not to mention that the Albanian Government announced in March 1922 that it would no longer tolerate, far less support, these Bulgarian komitadjis. Perhaps the Government had come to understand that it required the friendship of Yugoslavia. And one hopes it will be able to act up to its intentions. Let it ask the well-known General Protogeroff to depart—his business has been at Tirana and along the frontier—let Captain Ilja Kotsoroff no longer be allowed to stay at Bilishta near the Greek frontier, engaged in propaganda. The same applies to Captain Lefteroff at Pogradec, and Dimitché Fanija, a barber who has risen to be chief of komitadjis and was also living, early in 1922, at Pogradec. Among the others who demand attention are Kolja Oftcheni, of Oftcheni village, Todor Alexandroff, who was born at Štip, and Redjib Betchir, a Moslem of Monastir, who arrived at Korytza on February 16 with no less than seventeen companions. They came from Tirana and had ordered rooms at the Hotel Telegraph. Two days before this the Serbian Consul in Korytza heard they were expected; he sent to the hotel, which is not large, and said he would like twenty rooms over a period of ten days. The proprietor replied that his hotel was full, and a strange rumour spread that Serbia's army was about to march into the town. When Redjib Betchir and company arrived, in order to recuperate from their journey and make their arrangements, they let

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themselves be seen in cafés, drinking with Albanian officers and the police, and mostly it was the Albanians who paid. One or two of the travellers appeared at the Yugoslav Consulate and asked for a *visa* that would enable them to go quite openly to Macedonia. They had come from Constantinople, and asserted that they had dear friends in Monastir, Struga and Gostivar, whom they were very anxious to visit. One wondered why they had not gone direct by rail from Constantinople to Salonica and Monastir, instead of the very roundabout route *via* Albania. But they may have thought that there would be less vigilance displayed at this backdoor into Macedonia, and it is possible that they received facilities on the Italian ships—they and their kindred never come on British, French or Greek vessels. It would be necessary, the consul told them, to wait until the various prefects in Macedonia had confirmed the existence of their friends, and would they kindly return for the *visas* in a week or ten days. But though these men remained for some time at Korytza, not one of them ever made a second appearance at the Consulate. After a while they dispersed, six of them going to Kostur in Greece, six of them to the department of Monastir, and six in the direction of Struga and Prisren. Between them they had about 200,000 Italian lire and 40,000 napoleons in gold; the scale of pay which those who went to Struga were offering was four napoleons a month for each man who would join them. . . . A message came at the beginning of April to a Bel-

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grade newspaper, saying that the Albanian authorities had executed two Italian agents and several Bulgarian komitadjis. They may really mean to keep a decent frontier.]

A few miles to the south of Pogradec there rises a great barrier of mountains, and the frontier should be drawn along the ridge. The only reason why Albania—despite the wishes of the local population—has been brought up to the lake is that during the negotiations for the Treaty of London, in 1918, the Austrian representative insisted on one half of Ochrida, so full of admirable fish, being handed over to Albania. The Austrians, at that time, looked upon Albania very much as if she was or was about to be their colony. The frontier should be at the village Stenje, to the west of Lake Presba, and by this route there is good communication between Korytza and Monastir, whereas the other route, by way of Florina, is closed in winter.

X

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WHEN we read about those times when gorgeous cities like Bombay, or provinces or islands, found themselves transferred from one allegiance to another, since they were a portion of the dowry of a princess, we faintly smile to think that such barbaric practices can ever have been countenanced by European nations, which in other ways were then extremely cultured. Nothing of the sort, nothing in the least resembling this could happen, we protest, to-day. A thousand letters to the *Times* would have bewailed the utter inhumanity of making over Heligoland to Prussia on the marriage of the future Empress Frederick. How abominable, how loathsome that these islanders should not be taken into consultation, that they should be treated as mere cattle on a farm ! Yet when this island was transferred to Germany, and we received instead a piece of Africa, there was no such indignant outcry ; in fact—with hardly anyone a better prophet than Lord Salisbury—there was the comfortable thought that we had got the better of the bargain, since the sandy, useless island in a hundred years would not exist. Some people, it is true, spoke up for the sturdy islanders ;

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but the public viewed the whole transaction with much more complacency than if they had been given as a wedding portion. Very few were those who stopped to think exactly how much difference our gain of Zanzibar would make to these our fellow-subjects' loyal feelings—of course, there 'may have been among them some who were so super-loyal that this aggrandisement of the British Empire reconciled them to their fate.

Thus we have not sailed very far away from that era when a royal bride arriving with a few thousand or a million human beings had as little thought to ask them whether this was in accordance with their wish as she herself had been asked the same question. And it should not shock us to be told that the inhabitants of the two old Turkish sandjaks of Argyro-castro and Korytza were made over to Albania in 1921 by the benevolent Powers, who, in January 1920, had resolved that the sole possible solution was to let this region, as most of the inhabitants desired, be joined to Greece. The wishes of a little people are considered nowadays, if they do not cause inconvenience to the wishes of the great.

Those who imagined that the fate of the two sandjaks—call the district South Albania or North Epirus, as you will—had been definitely settled in 1920 were basing themselves on the very unequivocal reasons for this step that were advanced by the French and British delegates. But in 1921 the decision was reversed. The ordinary man will be nonplussed by this. For him it will not be sufficient reason that Great Britain happened now to

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wish for Italy's support and was inclined, if this were given her in other fields, to do her best for Italy in South Albania. He also will be puzzled why the fall of Venizelos should relax the interest of France and England in the welfare of the Christians of South Albania, who happened to be Venizelists by a large majority.

The deed is done, and it is necessary to consider if it may be possible for the Albanian Government to overcome the hostile feelings that prevail against it in this province, which exceeds all others both in wealth and culture. What precisely are the reasons for this enmity? The racial reason, which is often spoken of, does not, I think, exist; because the Orthodox majority of South Albania (as we have mentioned more than once) is Albanian, and not Greek; they would not fight against inclusion in Albania if it were not for divers other causes, geographical and human.

That great range of mountains, the Acroceraunians, divides South Albania from the rest of the country.¹ There are no trade routes which

¹ Sir Thomas Holdich, the specialist on frontiers, who is reputed to have sentiments which are more albanophil than grecophil, wrote in his *Boundaries in Europe and the Near East* (London, 1918), that "Greece is separated from Albania by the heights of Grammos," which leave to the former the regions of Himarra, Argyrocastro, Delvino and Leskovik. But M. Venizelos had suggested to the Powers that the Tepeleni and Klisura district, as well as that to the north and north-west of Korytza, should be given to the Albanians, in view of the inhabitants being chiefly Muhammedans. It is doubtful whether those of Tepeleni and Klisura could, under these circumstances, exist; but, as

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cross these mountains ; never during the five hundred years of Turkish rule was there any commercial connection between the two sandjaks and Albania. To say therefore that Albania cannot live without them is incomprehensible ; on the other hand, that they would be condemned to death if this were brought about is very obvious. Take the rich town of Korytza, whose business intercourse has always been with Jannina and Monastir-Salonica. It stands to reason that the abandonment of such natural markets in favour of new ones that must be reached over mountains which are nowhere less than a thousand feet high is not an alluring proposition. The American delegates at the Peace Conference in 1919—moved perhaps by the arguments of American albanophil missionaries—maintained (in opposition to the views of the French and British delegates) that Korytza might well be attached to Albania, in consequence of the road, made in the war, which runs between it and Valona. But in 1920 when the question had been more closely examined and the reports of American Consuls had been studied by the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Senate, an unanimous resolution was passed on May 17 by the whole Senate which was to the effect that Korytza (and other parts to which we need not now allude) “should be attributed by the Peace Conference to Greece and incorporated in that kingdom.” If

M. Venizelos says, they may prefer a state of things which economically seems to spell disaster, and reject material welfare under the Greek Government.

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the town and the district which surrounds it be attached to Albania it will become for that country not only a white elephant but a dead one. In the vain hope of continuing its ancestral prosperity the Albanian Government would have to make enormous and fruitless sacrifices. The people of the town and sandjak would also have to emigrate *en masse*. One therefore understands why the inhabitants of this part of South Albania (and the more sensible people beyond the mountains must agree with them) are opposed to their union with the rest of Albania. It is not because a number of geographers—English, French, Dutch and German—published maps from the seventeenth century onwards that give the Acroceraunian Mountains as the southern boundary of Albania. . . . Similar considerations cause the business people of Argyrocastro to view with dread the results of their inclusion in Albania. And, apart from the question of markets, how will the Albanian Government be able to provide the water-works, the agricultural school and the various other necessities of that town and district? What of Santi Quaranta? Would her mercantile population wish that she should, as at this moment, be merely the port of a stagnant little hinterland, or that she should be the main thoroughfare for the whole of Epirus? She would speedily attract to herself a large amount of the merchandise which now goes through Prevesa, a Greek port with far fewer facilities, actual and potential, than are enjoyed by Santi Quaranta. Then we come to Himarra, the maritime zone,

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which is separated by the most formidable mountains from Albania proper ; practically the whole of her trade, imports and exports, is with Corfu. No measures (such as the construction of railways) which Albania could inaugurate, so as to counteract this gravitation of South Albania towards Greece, are in the bounds of possibility for many years. But if Europe determines that the two sandjaks are to remain under Albanian sovereignty, then—although the Moslem may stifle insurrections—she must not expect that the provinces, subsiding into ruin, will be reconciled.

Turning to the human factor, it would seem that a long period must elapse before the Moslems of Albania are fit to govern the more cultured Christians of the south. A ruling class which can conduct itself as we have seen, does not stand on the threshold of a worthier life ; it is intolerable that those barbarities should not be stopped.

In another book, which treats of North Albania, I have suggested that the best solution of the difficulties there would be if those Moslem and Christian tribes of the north, who prefer a Yugoslav suzerainty to that of their own countrymen, should for a time be liberated from the rule of the Tirana Government and become a Yugoslav sphere of influence. For a couple of years after the European War some of these—Merturi, Klementi and so forth—enjoyed the presence of small Serbian detachments (which they had asked for), and if the Powers had consulted them these units would be there to-day.

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The mission which they carried out with great success was to be at the disposal of the local authorities and to assist them in the maintenance of order. Gradually they were showing these wild children of the mountains that it was quite possible for them to make improvements in their mode of life. And I believe that the Albanian question would be much more likely to be solved in this way—with a Yugoslav sphere in the north and a Greek sphere in the south—than in any other fashion.

“But if you would place the north and the south under foreign control, what prospect is there,” I shall be asked, “that Yugoslavia and Greece will ever retire? And without those two regions there can be no independent Albania.”

“If we assume,” I would answer, “that an independent Albania is desirable—and you must acknowledge that in the past it was desired much more by foreigners than by Albanians—then the prospect for such independence seems to be a poor one if so many of the citizens at each end of the country are permanently hostile to the central Government. Albania’s foundations will be much securer—excuse the platitude—if those two zones come into the country of their own free will.”

“Yugoslavia and Greece will not allow——”

“There will be a plebiscite after the two zones have made the requisite progress. And perhaps they will decide to throw in their lot with the other portion of Albania, if the Moslems there consent to certain terms, such as the regular payment of taxes, the institution of schools for both sexes, and

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so forth. The two more civilised zones will then be in a position to uplift the central part of the country, and thus a much more promising Albania would be brought into existence than the one which now we see. And it need scarcely be said that both Greece and Yugoslavia ask for nothing better than a solid and responsible neighbour."

"Yes, but suppose that either the northern or the southern zone decide to remain outside Albania?"

"If that is their will it should be respected. I think that up to the Acroceraunian Mountains in the south, and up to the mountain frontier drawn, in 1918, by Franchet d'Espérey in the north, this is quite likely to occur. . . . The frontier which was ordered by the Ambassadors' Conference at the end of 1921 was very unfair to the Yugoslavs, since it is based—with certain modifications—on the 1918 frontier, which was drawn up under Austrian auspices. The only proper line is Franchet d'Espérey's of 1918, for this affords the Serbs an adequate protection against an unruly neighbour. It is a fact that many of the Albanians who live on their own side of the present line are animated with friendly feelings for the Yugoslavs; other Albanians—such is their eternal discord—are unfriendly. But even the most amicable are driven sometimes by the pangs of hunger to make forays into Yugoslav territory. The sterile nature of this region, and far into Albania, should have hindered anyone from writing that the Yugoslavs are anxious to annex it. All they want is such a frontier as can be defended with a reasonable guard, and not such

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a line which, as now, prevents a very large number of her men from being available elsewhere—a state of things, be it noted, that is not distasteful to one of the members of the Ambassadors' Conference. The Yugoslavs intend to make the best of the present position by establishing a series of block-houses along the frontier and in these to have a full supply of goods ; the price of these goods will be such that it is confidently hoped in this way to dissuade the Albanians from their lawless expeditions. And, after all, the Serbs will not be called upon to make a great financial sacrifice. In 1918, when Serbia could only spare a few soldiers to keep the frontier at St Naoum, some hundreds of Albanians came over and held a meeting in the courtyard of the monastery. They were in a state of famine, and this seemed to them a favourable opportunity for a cattle-raid. The prefect of Ochrida appeared on the scene with a bag of money, a bargain was made, after a certain amount of haggling, and finally the Albanians went home with $2\frac{1}{2}$ dinars (about 2s.) apiece."

"But if those regions in the north and south secede from Albania will the rest of the country be able to live? Those rich southern provinces——"

"Both Albania and Greece have said that they simply must have the two sandjaks. Otherwise they assert that it will not only be a terrible thing for them but for the sandjaks."

"If Albania becomes a little land shut in by those high mountains——"

"Surely that is just what most appeals to them.

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Their instinct always was to look askance upon their nearest neighbours. And the last thing, down to our day, they have striven for is to facilitate communications. For example, when in September 1919 Venizelos and Tittoni were discussing a new railway line that was to join Rome to Athens by way of Valona, the Albanians submitted a memorandum to the Peace Conference which expressly stated that Albania would not assist the beneficial work."

"Well then, it comes to this—you believe that independent Albania will eventually be reduced to a very small, almost wholly Muhammedan State, protected by the barricade of mountains? If the inhabitants should prefer to join themselves to the large number of Muhammedan Albanians who are now in Yugoslavia——"

"That would be a very natural proceeding."

"You have not thought of Italy. Would she not veto this?"

"Yugoslavia's veto would be more important. Her responsible men have no great longing to increase their number of Albanian subjects."

"But is it likely that the Albanians of Central Albania wish to surrender the independence of their State?"

"When did they ever ask for independence until Austria forced it on them after the Balkan War? And who will venture to say that in the mass of the Albanian people the idea of national union has made an appreciable progress since the futile efforts of César Berthier, who tried during 1807, on the

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Ionian Isles, to unite under one chief a number of Albanians belonging to different clans? All the patience and the training of the French were thrown away, for when, in October 1809, Zante, Cephalonia and Ithaca were attacked by the British, that part of their garrison which consisted of a few hundred men drawn from French and Italian regiments behaved with courage, whereas the Albanians lost no time in going over to the enemy. The one ideal which the clansmen had in common was the defiance of discipline; military organisation was abhorrent to them; of State organisation they had never dreamed. There are some people who can appreciate nothing greater than local freedom, and perhaps a majority of Moslems in what is left of Albania will come to think that they will enjoy more of this under Yugoslav rule than under that of their own compatriots. This, however, is not a very pressing matter. What Europe has to do is not to thrust back those Albanians of the north and south who see that near them is a culture which they want to share. She must not allow that sin against the light, and she must not permit them, slipping in a marsh, to look no longer at the stars."

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